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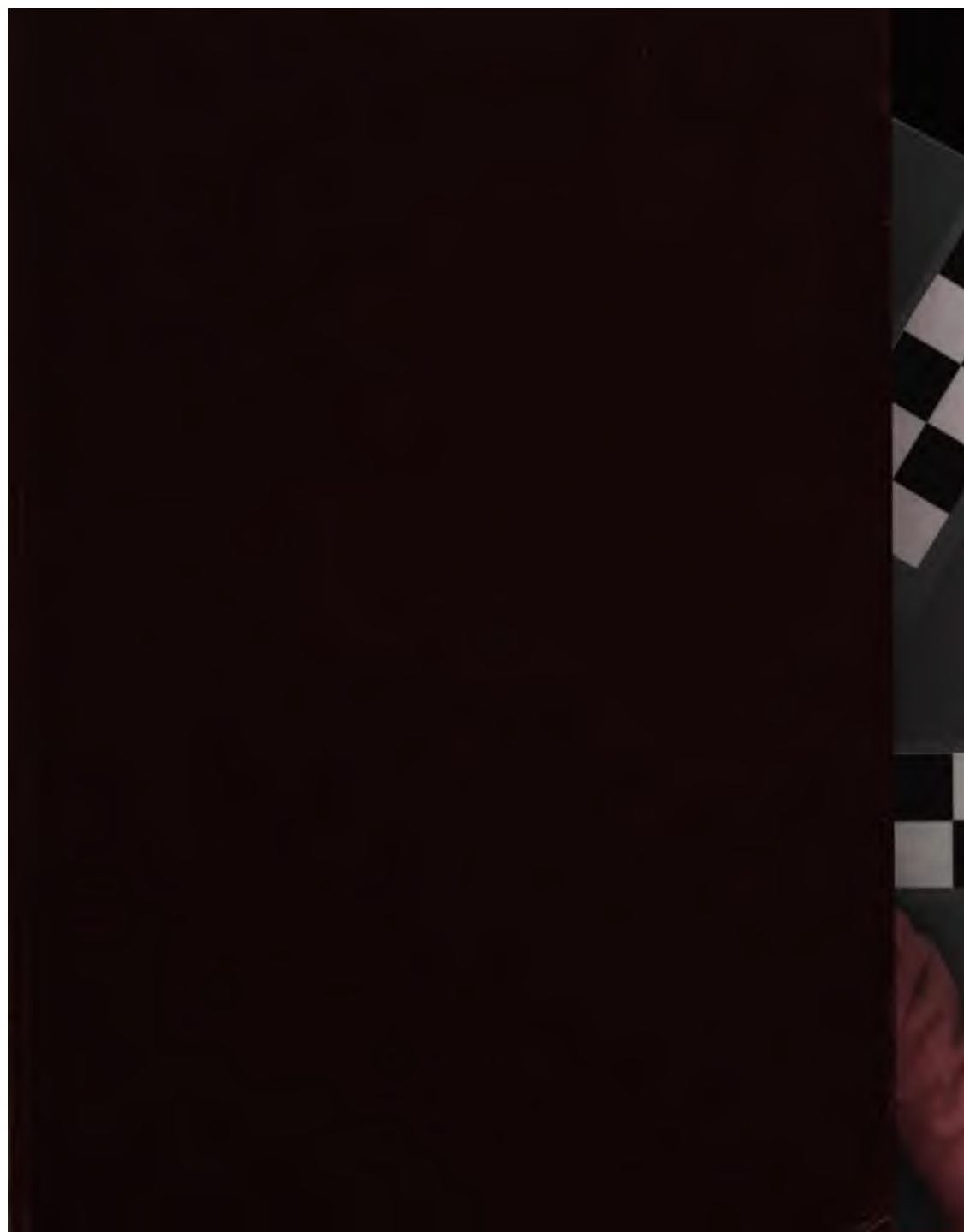
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**This One**



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## A FEW OF HAMILTON'S LETTERS



*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

*THE CONQUEROR*

*SENATOR NORTH*

*THE ARISTOCRATS*

*PATIENCE SPARHAWK AND HER TIMES*

*AMERICAN WIVES AND ENGLISH HUSBANDS*

*HIS FORTUNATE GRACE*

*CALIFORNIA SERIES*

*THE SPLENDID IDLE FORTIES*

*THE DOOMSWOMAN*

*THE VALIANT RUNAWAYS: A BOOK FOR BOYS*

*A DAUGHTER OF THE VINE*

*THE CALIFORNIANS*

*A WHIRL ASUNDER*





A Hamilton

# OF HAMILTON'S LETTERS

WITH HIS DESCRIPTION OF  
THE WEST INDIAN  
AMERICANS OF 1782

BY J. W. FLEMING

NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS



*W. H. ...*

# A FEW OF HAMILTON'S LETTERS

INCLUDING HIS DESCRIPTION OF  
THE GREAT WEST INDIAN  
HURRICANE OF 1772

EDITED BY

GERTRUDE ATHERTON

AUTHOR OF "THE CONQUEROR," "THE SPLENDID IDLE FORTIES"  
ETC., ETC.

*WITH PORTRAITS*

New York

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**Norwood Mass. U.S.A.**



To  
CAPTAIN WILLIAM RAMSING  
OF DENMARK  
and  
THE REVEREND W. C. WATSON  
OF ST. CROIX, DANISH WEST INDIES  
FROM WHOM I HAVE RECEIVED INVALUABLE HELP  
IN MY RESEARCHES

.





## INTRODUCTION

HAMILTON'S entire correspondence, exclusive of his state papers, pamphlets, etc., fills three octavo volumes. Much of it is uninteresting to-day to any but a student of the past, and will never be approached by the general reader. Taken as a whole, the letters form almost a history of the times, but that history has been written more than once in a manner to require less effort on the part of the temperately inquiring mind. This selection has been made with a view to throw as much light as possible on the *man*. They reveal him in many of his moods, and although they have not, in every case, the high literary quality peculiar to his great reports and pamphlets, a few, the letter to Laurens, describing the capture and death of André, for instance, could hardly be improved upon. The letter to Duane is the most remarkable; and even by those to whom at first glance it may appear very long and very dry, it will well repay a careful study, — not only because in it a young man of twenty-three first hewed the foundation stones of a great

Republic, but because it throws many side-lights on the workings of Hamilton's mind and character. In it, indeed, are to be found indications of every part of the immediate and future Hamilton, with the sole exception of that not inconsiderable spot which was more than responsive to the other sex.

Those who would fill in the spaces which exist necessarily between the letters of this little collection, will find the missing links in the first, fifth, and sixth volumes of "The Works of Alexander Hamilton," J. C. Hamilton edition. They are in every public library. Those so fortunate as to possess the Lodge edition are not in need of instructions.

The letters to the Provincial Congress are to be found in the Journal of that body.

The letter to James Hamilton, Jr., and the correspondence with Burr are contained in the last pages of the "History of the Republic." The correspondence of Washington with Hamilton and Jefferson, regarding the battle in the Gazettes between the Secretaries, is copied from the tenth volume of Sparks' "Writings of George Washington."

The several letters *to* Hamilton, scattered through

this volume, are introduced for too obvious reasons to require explanation.

If Hamilton kept his love-letters, some true friend suppressed them after his death. But, reasoning from the well-known honour and wariness of his character, it is more than likely that he destroyed all such effusions promptly. But where are those he himself wrote? Not one to a woman but his wife has ever come to light. Had they outlasted him a generation they would have been bought or stolen by his enemies, and flung to the public long since. Perhaps he never wrote any. When a man has the brain thoroughly to appreciate his weakness for woman he is often very careful of himself on paper. And Hamilton's short life was a phenomenally busy one. It is a wonder he ever found time to make love; the inditing of his sentiments must surely have seemed superfluous. But his annual receipts must have been heavy.

The reviewers of "The Conqueror" have accused me of too much enthusiasm, which, logically, they decide has led to a violent partisanship and much one-sidedness. Probably no reviewer living has any enthusiasm left in him,—small blame to him,—and it is one of the peculiar weaknesses of human

nature to disapprove of what we do not possess. Thus the poor disapprove of wealth, the timid of audacity, the failures of success. A biography without enthusiasm is a very poor thing. You may get the bald facts, a calm dispassionate estimate, correct if the writer be infallible; but none of the glow and rush; and without those qualities you do not care as much for the character and fate of the subject as for the living and hitherto nameless hero of a newspaper story. To remark that to do a thing thoroughly is better than to do it halfway, would seem a lapse into flagrant platitude, yet it is a truism which is oftenest forgot by critics. I wrote of Hamilton, not because I was anxious to create a prodigy, but because he was one and compelled my enthusiasm. That he was the best brain that has given his services to this country no profound and impartial student of history pretends to deny. Even the biographers of Jefferson pay their tribute. But because the great majority of critics are unacquainted with American history, they accuse me of wrongfully elevating Hamilton at the expense of his contemporaries. If he was not greater, why, pray, did the entire Federalist party — composed of exceptionally brilliant, sensible, and patriotic men

---

—spontaneously follow his lead for a quarter of a century? Why did his rivals hate him as no man has been hated in the history of this country? The truth is that I did not exaggerate in a single instance, and, what is more, I exhibited his faults and weaknesses with considerable pleasure. No man can be either great or lovable without them, and had Hamilton been the dull perfection which even the much misrepresented Washington was not, he would have had to pass on and submit once more to the biographer without enthusiasm.

G. A.

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have, through the kind offices of a friend, Captain William Ramsing of the Danish Army, obtained a copy of Hamilton's description of the hurricane of August, 1772. It will be remembered that it was this piece of literary work, published in a West Indian newspaper, which convinced his relatives and friends that he deserved the education he craved, and incidentally gave him to us. Until Captain Ramsing discovered it, it is doubtful if it had been read for a century and a quarter. All John Hamilton knew was the bare fact that his father had written it and attributed

to its happy inspiration his real start in life; he made no effort to find a copy of the old newspaper, and Hamilton evidently had not preserved one. This curious document is interesting and valuable in many ways: it is probably the only existing description of the greatest hurricane, with the exception of the one of 1899, which ever visited the West Indies; it is addressed to his father, which shows that he was in affectionate correspondence with James Hamilton at that time; it is the production of a youth of sixteen; and above all it throws a new light on both the workings of Hamilton's mind and the development of his literary talent at that age. Strange a mixture as it is of dramatic power, a somewhat excessive piety, and literary self-consciousness, it is a remarkable production, for it reveals an original mind striving to express itself through the trammels of certain standards and formulæ which he had evidently accepted as the correct models for the young man of literary aspirations. Fortunately he was not long throwing off trammels of all sorts, with the exception of the temperate precision and clearness of the best eighteenth-century literature.

It will be observed that the hurricane took place

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at night. Mine, alas! began in the early morning —and hailed from the southeast.<sup>1</sup> But there was absolutely no authority to consult, and I was obliged to construct this almost forgotten phenomenon from the abundant data of the equally tremendous hurricane of 1899. Although I knew that lightning and thunder sometimes accompany these great wind storms, I omitted this manifestation from my description lest I strain the credulity of the Anglo-Saxon reader, always prone to scent exaggeration. It will now be seen that I did indeed “draw it mild,” for Hamilton’s hurricane had falling meteors, the most terrific accompaniment of lightning and thunder, and a prevailing smell of gunpowder, — which must, in sooth, have added to the alarms of the undevout.

The first two books of “The Conqueror,” as stated in the preface to that book, must always stand as imaginative work based upon the discovery of a few most important facts. But all details had to be imagined or omitted. I was quite well aware that if Hamilton’s description of this hurricane ever

<sup>1</sup> Where West Indian hurricanes usually form. This hurricane of 1772, unless Hamilton was mistaken, probably formed in the Gulf of Mexico.



came to light it would be in many respects different from mine ; but the searcher I employed in Copenhagen while writing the book proves now to have been worthless, and I had to go ahead or ignore the subject. I was not in the least alarmed by the danger of eventually disproving any description of my own; for he who is afraid of making mistakes draws only the small prizes of life. There was no possibility of mistake after Hamilton came to this country, for the record of his life from 1772 on is as open and full as could be wished ; but there is undoubtedly more and more to learn in the archives of Copenhagen concerning those early years on St. Croix ; and when the search is exhausted I shall give the result to the world.

It will also be noticed that Hamilton's letter was published on St. Croix. I had it sent to St. Kitts, as I was given to understand that there was no English newspaper on St. Croix at that time. I read all the books ever written on these Islands (in English), but found no mention of newspapers.

Almost immediately after sending off the above postscript to the printer I received from Captain Ramsing information of the most important nature.

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It corroborates the scant data I found in the West Indian records, and dispels conclusively any mystery which may still be thought to surround Hamilton's birth. The information is taken from The Protocol of the Dealing Court in Christianstadt for the year 1768. The date is the third of August. (These records of the Dealing Court are in the Provincial Archives of Iceland, — which are nevertheless in Copenhagen.) Previous entries of this year deal with debts of Rachael Lawien,<sup>1</sup> deceased; also the following: "Daniel Barry claims payment of 71 rixd. 4 reals, for furnishing linen and black cloth, which he has supplied for the funeral of the Deceased according to Peter Lytton's orders, who, being of the family of the Deceased, undertook to furnish same."

The entry which most concerns us, however, furnishes the following facts: John Michael Lawien had been, on St. Croix, by the "Ember" Court,<sup>2</sup> granted a divorce from Rachael Lawien on the 25th of June, 1759. He was permitted to marry again, but she, being the defendant, was not. At

<sup>1</sup> For the orthographic vagaries of this name, see Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> A clerical court which met on the four Ember days. The Governor-general of the Danish West Indies presided.

her death she possessed several slaves which she left to her sons, Alexander and James Hamilton. John Michael Lawien made application for these slaves in behalf of her "only lawfully begotten heir Peter Lawien." Peter Lytton seems to have been appointed guardian of the young Hamiltons. Lawien subsequently won his suit.

One-half of Lawien's divorce complaint is here quoted to have been that Rachael "absented herself," *i.e.* deserted him. This bears out Hamilton's own statement that his mother left Lawien soon after her marriage (because of ill-treatment). There is no evidence that she was unfaithful to Lawien while under his roof, or even that she deserted him to live with Hamilton. It is certain that she was living with her mother on St. Kitts in 1756. This fact is established by the Common Records of that island. As she was only thirty-two when she died (see fac-simile of page from church register, photographed for the present pastor, Mr. Watson), she was at this time only twenty, and must have been sixteen or less when she married Lawien. We have Hamilton's statement that she was forced into a hated marriage by her mother. I based my story on Hamilton's own, and it is not likely that

anything will be found to disprove it. Hamilton appears to have been a man who told the truth on a given subject or discreetly held his tongue. Moreover, my own discoveries bear out all his statements.

He and his brother James evidently bore their father's name from the first. Rachael's alliance with James Hamilton was, beyond all doubt, an accepted social fact in the Islands. Alliances of that sort continued to bask in the approval of tropical society during many years of the nineteenth century.



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I

ST. CROIX



## A FEW OF HAMILTON'S LETTERS

TO EDWARD STEVENS

ST. CROIX, November 11, 1769.

*Dear Edward,*— This serves to acknowledge the receipt of yours per Captain Lowndes, which was delivered me yesterday. The truth of Captain Lightbown and Lowndes' information is now verified by the presence of your father and sister, for whose safe arrival I pray, and that they may convey that satisfaction to your soul, that must naturally flow from the sight of absent friends in health; and shall for news this way refer you to them.

As to what you say, respecting your soon having the happiness of seeing us all, I wish for an accomplishment of your hopes, provided they are concomitant with your welfare, otherwise not; though doubt whether I shall be present or not, for to confess my weakness, Ned, my ambition is prevalent, so that I contemn the grovelling condition of a clerk, or the like, to which my fortune

condemns me, and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station. I am confident, Ned, that my youth excludes me from any hope of immediate preferment, nor do I desire it; but I mean to prepare the way for futurity. I'm no philosopher, you see, and may be justly said to build castles in the air; my folly makes me ashamed, and beg you'll conceal it; yet, Neddy, we have seen such schemes successful, when the projector is constant. I shall conclude by saying I wish there was a war.

I am, dear Edward,

Yours,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

P.S. I this moment received yours by William Smith, and pleased to see you give such close application to study.

#### TO TILEMAN CRUGER

ST. CROIX, Nov. 16, 1771.

In behalf of Mr. Nicolas Cruger (who, by reason of a very ill state of health, went from this to New York the 15th ult.), I have the pleasure to

address you by the long expected sloop, Thunderbolt, Captain William Newton, owned by Messrs. Jacob Walton, John Harris, and Nicolas Cruger, the latter of whom has written you fully concerning her destination, which I need not repeat. She has on board besides a parcel of lumber for yourself, sundry articles on account of her owners as per enclosed bill of lading; and when you have disposed of them you will please to credit each partner with one third of the proceeds.

Mr. N. Cruger's proportion of this, and the balance of your account hitherto, will more than pay for his one third cost of her first cargo up; and for the other two, I shall endeavour to place value in your hands betimes. I only wish for a line from you to know what will best answer.

Reports here represent matters in a very disagreeable light, with regard to the Guarda Costas, which are said to swarm upon the coast; but as you will be the best judge of what danger there might be, all is submitted to your prudent direction.

Capt. Newton must arm with you, as he could not so conveniently do it here. Give me leave to hint to you that you cannot be too particular

in your instructions to him. I think he seems to want experience in such voyages. Messrs. Walton and John H. Cruger are to furnish you themselves with their respective proportion of the cost of the several cargoes.

The staves on board, if by any means convenient, I beg may be returned by the sloop; they will command a good price here, and I suppose little or nothing with you; could they be got at I would not send them down, but they are stowed promiscuously among other things.

If convenient, please to deliver the hogsheads, now containing the Indian meal, to the captain as water casks, and others should he want them. I supplied him with twenty here. I must beg your reference to Mr. Cruger's last letter of the 2d ult. for other particulars.

Our crop will be very early, so that the utmost dispatch is necessary to import three cargoes of mules in due time.

## TO CAPTAIN WILLIAM NEWTON

ST. CROIX, Nov. 16, 1771.

Herewith I give you all your dispatches, and desire you will proceed immediately to Curracoa. You are to deliver your cargo there to Tileman Cruger, Esq., agreeably to your bill of lading, whose directions you must follow in every respect concerning the disposal of your vessel after your arrival.

You know it is intended that you shall go from thence to the main for a load of mules, and I must beg if you do, you'll be very choice in the quality of your mules, and bring as many as your vessel can conveniently contain—by all means take in a large supply of provender. Remember, you are to make three trips this season, and unless you are very diligent you will be too late, as our crops will be early in. Take care to avoid the Guarda Costas. I place an entire reliance upon the prudence of your conduct.





**II**  
**THE ARMY**



## TO THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

1776.

*Gentlemen*,—I take the liberty to request your attention to a few particulars which will be of considerable importance to the future progress of the company under my command, and I will be much obliged to you for as speedy a determination concerning them as you can conveniently give. The most material is respecting the pay. Our company, by their articles, are to be subject to the same regulations, and to receive the same pay as the Continental artillery. Hitherto I have conformed to the standard laid down in the Journal of the Congress published the 10th May, 1775, but I am well informed, that by some later regulation, the pay of the artillery has been augmented, and now stands according to the following rates: captains £10. 13. 4; captain-lieutenants £8; lieutenants each, £7. 6. 8; sergeants, £3. 6. 8; corporals, £3. 1. 4; bombardiers, £3. 1. 4; gunners, £3; matrosses, £2. 7. 4; drummers and fifers, £3. By comparing these with my pay rolls, you will discover a considerable difference,

and I doubt not you will be easily sensible that such a difference should not exist. I am not personally interested in having an augmentation agreeable to the above rates, because my own pay will remain the same that it now is; but I make this application on behalf of the company, as I am fully convinced such a disadvantageous distinction will have a very pernicious effect on the minds and behaviour of the men. They do the same duty with the other companies, and think themselves entitled to the same pay. They have been already comparing accounts, and many marks of discontent have lately appeared on this score. As to the circumstance of our being confined to the defence of the colony, it will have little or no weight, for there are but few in the company who would not as willingly leave the colony on any necessary expedition as stay in it; and they will not therefore think it reasonable to have their pay curtailed on such a consideration.

Captain Beauman, I understand, enlists all his men on the above terms, and this makes it very difficult for me to get a single recruit, for men will naturally go to those who pay them best. On

this account I should wish to be immediately authorized to offer the same pay to all who may be inclined to enlist.

The next thing I should wish to know is, whether I might be allowed any actual expenses that might attend the enlistment of men, should I send into the country for that purpose; the expense would not be great and it would enable me to complete my company at once, and bring it the sooner into proper order and discipline. Also, I should be glad to be informed if my company is to be allowed the frock which is given to the other troops as a bounty. This frock would be extremely serviceable in summer while the men are on fatigue, and would put it in their power to save their uniform much longer.

I am, gentlemen, with the greatest respect,

Your most obedient servant

A. HAMILTON, *Captain.*

## TO THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

July 26, 1776.

*Gentlemen,*—I am obliged to write you, to remove a difficulty which arises respecting the quantity of subsistence which is to be allowed my men. Enclosed you will have the rate of rations which is the standard allowance of the whole Continental and even the Provincial army, but it seems Mr. Curtenius cannot afford to supply us with more than his contract stipulates, which by comparison, you will find is considerably less than the forementioned rate. My men, you are sensible, are by their articles, entitled to the same subsistence with the Continental troops; and it would be to them an insupportable discrimination, as well as a breach of the terms of their enlistment, to give them almost a third less provisions than the whole army besides receives. I doubt not you will readily put this matter upon a proper footing. Hitherto, we have drawn our full allowance from Mr. Curtenius, but he did it upon the supposition that he should have a farther consideration for the extra-

ordinary supply. At present, however, he scruples to proceed in the same way, until he can be put upon a more certain foundation.

## FROM HUGH KNOX

ST. CROIX, April 31, 1777.

*My Dear Friend*,—A pretty fair opportunity just offering for Philadelphia, I could not omit acknowledging the receipt of your very circumstantial and satisfactory letter of the 14th February. The thing has happened which I wished for. We have been amazed here by vague, imperfect, and very false accounts of matters from the continent: and I always told my friends, that if you survived the campaign, and had an hour of leisure to write to me, I expected a more true, circumstantial, and satisfactory account of matters in your letter, than by all the public papers and private intelligence we have received here. I have but a moment to command at present, and have not time to remark upon your letter. I can only inform you, that it has given high satisfaction to all friends here. We rejoice in your *good character and advancement*,



which is, indeed, only the just reward of merit. May you still live to deserve more and more from the friends of America, and to justify the choice, and merit the approbation, of the GREAT AND GOOD GENERAL WASHINGTON—a name which will shine with distinguished lustre in the annals of history—a name dear to the friends of the Liberties of Mankind! *Mark this:* You must be the Annalist and Biographer, as well as the Aide-de-camp, of General Washington—and the Historiographer of the AMERICAN WAR! I take the liberty to insist on this. I hope you take minutes and keep a Journal! If you have not hitherto, I pray do it henceforth. I seriously, and with all my little influence, urge this upon you. This may be a new and strange thought to you; but if you survive the present troubles, *I aver*—few men will be as well qualified to write the history of the present glorious struggle. God only knows how it may terminate. But however that may be, it will be a most interesting story.

I congratulate you on your recovery from a long and dangerous illness. It is my own case—I am just convalescent, after the severest attack I ever had in my life. I hope to write you more at large

soon, and remain, with the tender of every kind of friendly wish,

My dear Sir,

Your affectionate servant

HUGH KNOX.

FROM WASHINGTON

(LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS)

HEADQUARTERS, PHILADELPHIA Co. 30th Oct. 1777.

*Dear Sir,* — It having been judged expedient by a council of war held yesterday, that one of the gentlemen of my family should be sent to General Gates, in order to lay before him the state of this army and the situation of the enemy, and to point out to him the many happy consequences that will accrue from an immediate reinforcement being sent from the northern army, I have thought it proper to appoint you to that duty, and desire that you will immediately set out for Albany, at which place, or in the neighbourhood, I imagine you will find General Gates.

You are so fully acquainted with the principal points on which you are sent, namely, the state of

our army and the situation of the enemy, that I shall not enlarge on those heads. What you are chiefly to attend to, is to point out in the clearest and fullest manner to General Gates, the absolute necessity that there is for his detaching a very considerable part of the army at present under his command to the reinforcement of this; a measure that will in all probability reduce General Howe to the same situation in which General Burgoyne now is, should he attempt to remain in Philadelphia without being able to remove the obstructions in the Delaware, and open a free communication with his shipping. The force which the members of the council of war judge it safe and expedient to draw down at present, are the three New-Hampshire and fifteen Massachusetts regiments, with Lee's and Jackson's two of the sixteen, additional. But it is more than probable that General Gates may have detained part of those troops to the reduction of Ticonderoga, should the enemy not have evacuated it, or to the garrisoning of it. If they should, in that case the reinforcement will be according to circumstances; but, if possible, let it be made up to the same number out of other corps. If upon your meeting with General Gates, you should find that

he intends, in consequence of his success, to employ the troops under his command upon some expedition, by the prosecution of which the common cause will be more benefited than by their being sent down to reinforce this army, it is not my wish to give any interruption to the plan. But if he should have nothing more in contemplation than those particular objects which I have mentioned to you, and which it is unnecessary to commit to paper, in that case you are to inform him that it is my desire that the reinforcements before mentioned, or such part of them as can be safely spared, be immediately put in motion to join the army.

I have understood that General Gates has already detached Nixon's and Glover's brigades to join General Putnam, and General Dickinson informs me, Sir Henry Clinton has come down the river with his whole force; if this be a fact, you are to desire General Putnam to send the two brigades forward with the greatest expedition, as there can be no occasion for them there.

I expect you will meet Colonel Morgan's corps upon their way down; if you do, let them know how essential their services are to us, and desire the Colonel or commanding officer to hasten their

march as much as is consistent with the health of the men after their late fatigues.

G. W.

P.S. I ordered the detachment belonging to General McDougal's division to come forward. If you meet them, direct those belonging to Greene's, Angel's, Chandler's, and Duryee's regiments not to cross Delaware, but to proceed to Red Bank.

#### TO WASHINGTON

ALBANY, November, 1777.

*Dear Sir,*—I arrived here yesterday at noon, and waited upon General Gates immediately, on the business of my mission; but was sorry to find that his ideas did not correspond with yours, for drawing off the number of troops you directed. I used every argument in my power, to convince him of the propriety of the measure; but he was inflexible in the opinion that two brigades at least, of continental troops, should remain in and near this place. His reasons were that the intelligence of Sir Henry Clinton's having gone to join Howe, was not sufficiently authenticated to put it out of doubt; that there was, therefore, a possibility of

his returning up the river, which might expose the finest arsenal in America (as he calls the one here) to destruction, should this place be left so bare of troops as I proposed; and that the want of conveniences, and the difficulties of the roads, would make it impossible to remove artillery and stores for a considerable time; that the New England States would be left open to the depredations and ravages of the enemy; that it would put it out of his power to enterprise anything against Ticonderoga, which he thinks might be done in the winter, and which he considers it of importance to undertake.

The force of these reasons did by no means strike me; and I did everything in my power to show they were unsubstantial: but all I could effect was to have one brigade dispatched, in addition to those already marched. I found myself infinitely embarrassed, and was at a loss how to act. I felt the importance of strengthening you as much as possible: but on the other hand I found insuperable inconveniences, in acting diametrically opposite to the opinion of a gentleman whose successes have raised him to the highest importance. General Gates has won the entire confidence of the Eastern

States. If disposed to do it, by addressing himself to the prejudices of the people, he would find no difficulty to render a measure odious, which it might be said, with plausibility enough to be believed, was calculated to expose them to unnecessary dangers, notwithstanding their exertions, during the campaign, had given them the fullest title to repose and security. General Gates has influence and interest elsewhere: he might use it, if he pleased, to discredit the measure there also. On the whole, it appeared to me dangerous to insist on sending more troops from hence, while General Gates appeared so warmly opposed to it. Should any accident or inconvenience happen in consequence of it, there would be too fair a pretext for censure: and many people are too well disposed to lay hold of it. At any rate, it might be considered as using him ill, to take a step so contrary to his judgment, in a case of this nature. These considerations, and others which I shall be more explicit in when I have the pleasure of seeing you, determined me not to insist upon sending either of the other brigades remaining here. I am afraid that what I have done may not meet with your approbation, as not being perhaps fully warranted by your instructions; but I

ventured to do what I thought right, hoping that, at least, the goodness of my intention will excuse the error of my judgment.

I was induced to this relaxation the more readily, as I had directed to be sent to you two thousand militia, which were not expected by you ; and a thousand continental troops out of those proposed to be left with General Putnam, which I have written to him, since I found how matters were circumstanced here, to forward to you with all dispatch. I did this for several reasons : because your reinforcement would be more expeditious from that place than from this : because two thousand continental troops at Peekskill will not be wanted in its present circumstances ; especially as it was really necessary to have a body of continental troops at this place, for the security of the valuable stores here ; and I should not, if I had my wish, think it expedient to draw off more than two of the three brigades now here. This being the case, one of the ends you proposed to be answered, by leaving the ten regiments with General Putnam, will be equally answered by the troops here ; I mean that of covering and fortifying the Eastern States ; and one thousand continental troops in addition to the



militia collected, — and that may be collected here, — will be sufficient, in the Highlands, for covering the country down that way, and carrying on the works necessary to be raised for the defence of the river.

The troops gone, and going, to reinforce you, are near five thousand rank and file, continental troops; and two thousand five hundred Massachusetts and New Hampshire militia. These, and the seven hundred Jersey militia, will be a larger reinforcement than you expected, though not quite an equal number of continental troops; nor exactly in the way directed. General Lincoln tells me, the militia are very excellent; and though their time will be out by the last of this month, you will be able, if you think proper, to order the troops still remaining here to join you by the time their term of service expires.

I cannot forbear being uneasy, lest my conduct should prove displeasing to you; but I have done what, considering all circumstances, appeared to me most eligible and prudent.

Vessels are preparing to carry the brigade to New Windsor, which will embark this evening. I shall, this afternoon, set out on my return to camp;

and on my way, shall endeavour to hasten the troops forward.

I have the honour to be,

With great esteem and respect,

Your Excellency's most ob't,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

### To GATES

ALBANY, November 5, 1777.

*Sir*, — By inquiry, I have learned that General Patterson's brigade, which is the one you propose to send, is by far the weakest of the three now here, and does not consist of more than about six hundred rank and file fit for duty. It is true, that there is a militia regiment with it of about two hundred; but the time of service for which this regiment is engaged, is so near expiring, that it would be past by the time the men could arrive at their destination.

Under these circumstances, I cannot consider it either as compatible with the good of the service, or my instructions from His Excellency, General Washington, to consent that that brigade be selected from the three to go to him; but I am

under the necessity of desiring, by virtue of my orders from him, that one of the others be substituted instead of this; either General Nixon's or General Glover's; and that you will be pleased to give immediate orders for its embarkation.

Knowing that General Washington wished me to pay the greatest deference to your judgment, I ventured so far to deviate from the instructions he gave me, as to consent, in compliance with your opinion, that two brigades should remain here, instead of one. At the same time, permit me to observe, that I am not myself sensible of the expediency of keeping more than one, with the detached regiments in the neighbourhood of this place; and that my ideas coincide with those gentlemen whom I have consulted on the occasion, whose judgment I have much more reliance upon than on my own, and who must be supposed to have a thorough knowledge of all the circumstances. Their opinion is, that one brigade, and the regiments before mentioned, would amply answer the purposes of this post. When I preferred your opinion to other considerations, I did not imagine you would pitch upon a brigade little more than half as large as the others: and finding this to be

the case, I indispensably owe it to my duty, to desire, in His Excellency's name, that another may go instead of the one intended, and without loss of time. As it may be conducive to dispatch to send Glover's brigade, if agreeable to you, you will give orders accordingly.

I have the honour to be,

With respect and esteem,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

#### TO WASHINGTON

NEW WINDSOR, November 10th, 1777.

*Dear Sir,*—I arrived here last night from Albany. Having given General Gates a little time to recollect himself, I renewed my remonstrances on the necessity and propriety of sending you more than one brigade of the three he had detained with him; and finally prevailed upon him to give orders for Glover's in addition to Patterson's brigade, to march this way.

As it was thought conducive to expedition, to send the troops by water, as far as it could be done, I procured all the vessels that could be had at Albany,

fit for the purpose; but could not get more than sufficient to take Patterson's brigade. It was embarked the seventh instant; but the wind has been contrary: they must probably be here to-day. General Glover's brigade marched at the same time, on the east side of the river, the roads being much better than on this side. I am at this moment informed, that one sloop, with a part of Patterson's, has arrived, and that the others are in sight. They will immediately proceed, by water, to King's Ferry, and thence take the shortest route.

I am pained beyond expression to inform your Excellency, that on my arrival here, I find everything has been neglected and deranged by General Putnam; and that the two brigades, Poor's and Learned's, still remain here and on the other side of the river at Fishkill. Colonel Warner's militia, I am told, have been withdrawn to Peekskill, to aid in an expedition against New-York, which, it seems, is, at this time, the hobby-horse with General Putnam. Not the least attention has been paid to my order, in your name, for a detachment of one thousand men from the troops hitherto stationed at this post. Everything is sacrificed to the whim of taking New-York.

The two brigades of Poor and Learned, it appears, would not march for want of money and necessaries; several of the regiments having received no pay for six or eight months past. There has been a high mutiny among the former on this account, in which a captain killed a man, and was himself shot by his comrade. These difficulties, for want of proper management, have stopped the troops from proceeding. Governor Clinton has been the only man who has done anything toward removing them; but for want of General Putnam's coöperation has not been able to effect it. He has only been able to prevail with Learned's brigade, to agree to march to Goshen; in hopes, by getting them once on the go, to induce them to continue their march. On coming here, I immediately sent for Colonel Bailey, who now commands Learned's brigade, and persuaded him to engage to carry the brigade on to headquarters as fast as possible. This he expects to effect by means of five or six thousand dollars, which Governor Clinton was kind enough to borrow for me, and which Colonel Bailey thinks will keep the men in good humour till they join you. They marched this morning towards Goshen.

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I shall, as soon as possible, see General Poor, and do everything in my power to get him along; and hope I shall be able to succeed.

The plan I before laid, having been totally deranged, a new one has become necessary. It is now too late to send Warner's militia; by the time they reached you their term of service would be out. The motive for sending them, which was to give you a speedy reinforcement, has, by the past delay, been superseded.

By Governor Clinton's advice, I have sent out an order, in the most emphatical terms, to General Putnam, immediately to dispatch all the continental troops under him to your assistance; and to detain the militia instead of them.

My opinion is, that the only present use for troops in this quarter, is to protect the country from the depredations of little plundering parties; and for carrying on the works necessary for the defence of the river. Nothing more ought to be thought of. 'Tis only wasting time, and misapplying men, to employ them in a suicidal parade against New-York: for in this it will undoubtedly terminate. New-York is no object, if it could be taken: and to take it, would require more men than can be

spared from more substantial purposes. Governor Clinton's ideas coincide with mine. He thinks that there is no need of more continental troops here, than a few to give a spur to the militia in working upon the fortifications. In pursuance of this, I have given the directions before mentioned. If General Putnam attends to them, the troops under him may be with you nearly as early as any of the others (though he has, unluckily, marched them down to Tarrytown); and General Glover's brigade when it gets up, will be more than sufficient to answer the true end of this post.

If your Excellency agrees with me in opinion, it will be well to send instant directions to General Putnam, to pursue the object I have mentioned: for I doubt whether he will attend to anything I shall say, notwithstanding it comes in the shape of a positive order. I fear, unless you interpose, the works here will go on so feebly, for want of men, that they will not be completed in time: whereas, it appears to me of the greatest importance they should be pushed with the utmost vigour. Governor Clinton will do everything in his power. I wish General Putnam was recalled from the command of this post, and Governor Clinton would



accept it: the blunders and caprices of the former are endless. Believe me, Sir, nobody can be more impressed with the importance of forwarding the reinforcements coming to you, with all speed; nor could anyone have endeavoured to promote it more than I have done: but the *ignorance* of some and the *design* of others, have been almost insuperable obstacles. I am very unwell; but I shall not spare myself to get things immediately in a proper train; and for that purpose intend, unless I receive other orders from you, to continue with the troops in the progress of their march. As soon as I get General Poor's brigade in march, I shall proceed to General Putnam's at Peekskill.

### TO WASHINGTON

NEW WINDSOR, November 12, 1777.

*Dear Sir,*—I have been detained here these two days by a fever, and violent rheumatic pains throughout my body. This has prevented my being active, in person, for promoting the purposes of my errand; but I have taken every other method in my power, in which Governor Clinton has obligingly given me all the aid he could. In answer

to my pressing application to General Poor, for the immediate marching of his brigade, I was told they were under an operation for the itch; which made it impossible for them to proceed till the effects of it were over. By a letter, however, of yesterday, General Poor informs me, he would certainly march this morning. I must do him the justice to say, he appears solicitous to join you; and that I believe the past delay is not owing to any fault of his, but is wholly chargeable on General Putnam. Indeed, Sir, I owe it to the service to say, that every part of this gentleman's conduct is marked with blunder and negligence, and gives general disgust.

Parson's brigade will join you, I hope, in five or six days from this. Learned's may do the same. Poor's will, I am persuaded, make all the haste they can for the future. And Glover's may be expected at Fishkill to-night; whence they will be pressed forward as fast as I can have any influence to make them go. But I am sorry to say, the disposition for marching, in the officers and men in general, of these troops, does not keep pace with my wishes, or the exigency of the occasion. They have, unfortunately, imbibed an idea, that

they have done their part of the business of the campaign, and are now entitled to repose. This, and the want of pay, make them averse to a long march at this advanced season.

In a letter from General Putnam, just now received by Governor Clinton, he appears to have been, the tenth instant, at King's Street, at the White Plains. I have had no answer to my last applications. The enemy appear to have stripped New-York very bare. The people there, that is, the Tories, are in a great fright: this adds to my anxiety, that the reinforcements from this quarter to you are not in greater forwardness and more considerable.

I have written to General Gates, informing him of the accounts of the situation of New-York with respect to troops, and the probability of the force gone to Howe being greater than was at first expected; to try if this will not *extort* from him a further reinforcement. I don't, however, expect much from him; as he pretends to have in view an expedition against Ticonderoga, to be undertaken in the winter: and he knows that, under the sanction of this idea, he may, without censure, retain the troops. And as I shall be under a

necessity of speaking plainly to your Excellency, when I have the pleasure of seeing you, I shall not hesitate to say, I doubt whether you would have had a man from the northern army, if the whole could have been kept at Albany with any decency. Perhaps you will think me blamable in not having exercised the powers you gave me, and given a positive order. Perhaps I have been so: but, deliberately weighing all circumstances, I did not, and do not, think it advisable to do it.

I am, &c.

#### TO WASHINGTON

PEEKSKILL, Nov. 15, 1777.

*Dear Sir,*—I arrived at this place last night, and unfortunately find myself unable to proceed any further. Imagining I had gotten the better of my complaint, which confined me at Governor Clinton's and anxious to be about attending to the march of the troops, the day before yesterday I crossed the ferry, in order to fall in with General Glover's brigade, which was on its march from Poughkeepsie to Fishkill. I did not, however, see it myself, but received a letter from Colonel Shepherd, who commands the frigate, informing me

he would be last night at Fishkill, and this night at King's Ferry. Wagons, &c., are provided on the other side for his accommodation; so that there need be no delay but what is voluntary; and I believe Colonel Shepherd is as well disposed as could be wished to hasten his march. General Poor's brigade crossed the ferry the day before yesterday. Two York regiments, Courtland's and Livingston's, are with them: they were unwilling to be separated from the brigade, and the brigade from them. General Putnam was unwilling to keep them with him: and if he had consented to do it, the regiments to displace them would not join you six days as soon as these. The troops now remaining with General Putnam will amount to about the number you intended, though they are not exactly the same. He has detached Colonel Charles Webb's regiment to you. He *says* the troops with him are not in a condition to march, being destitute of shoes, stockings, and other necessities; but I believe the true reasons of his being unwilling to pursue the mode pointed out by you, were his aversion to the York troops, and his desire to retain General Parsons with him.

I am, &c.

## FROM WASHINGTON

HEAD QUARTERS, November 15th, 1777.

*Dear Sir,* — I have duly received your several favours, from the time you left me to that of the twelfth instant. I approve entirely of all the steps you have taken; and have only to wish that the exertions of those you have had to deal with, had kept pace with your zeal and good intentions. I hope your health will, before this, have permitted you to push on the rear of the whole reinforcement beyond New Windsor. Some of the enemy's ships have arrived in the Delaware; but how many have troops on board I cannot exactly ascertain. The enemy have lately damaged Fort Mifflin considerably; but our people keep possession, and seem determined to do so to the last extremity. Our loss in men has been but small. Captain Treat is unfortunately among the killed. I wish you a safe return,

And I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

FROM HUGH KNOX

ST. CROIX, December 10, 1777.

*Dear Hamilton,* — The fine, impartial, laconic, and highly descriptive account you favoured me with of the last year's campaign, in your letter of March last, excited in me, and many of your other friends here, an earnest desire of further accounts from your pen, of the succeeding fortunes of the Great American War: a war which will, one day, shine more illustriously in the historic page, than any which has happened since the times of Nimrod and the Giants; and deservedly, on account of the goodness of the cause, the grandeur of the object, the éclat of the generals, the bravery of the troops, — and (alas! that I should be obliged to add) of the cruelty and ferocity which has marked the route of your enemies; and the tons of brothers' blood which has been shed on the unhappy occasion.

I wrote two answers to your obliging letter both of which I hope have reached you; and in both of which I have urged it upon you, to make and collect such memoirs as the urgency

of your affairs will permit you; which may furnish materials for an accurate history of the war, when you shall have leisure to fill up and embellish such a skeleton, with all that elegance and dignity of which your fine pen is capable.

The honourable post you hold under the GREAT General Washington, and so near his person, will give you a peculiar advantage in delineating his character, both in his amiable private virtues and military abilities. And depend upon it, the very minutiae of that incomparable man will be read with avidity by posterity. You know me too well, I hope, to suspect me of superstition; yet I feel myself, at times, under a strong impulse to *prophecy*, that *Washington* was born for the deliverance of America—and that Providence who has raised and trained him up for that very purpose, will watch over his *sacred* life with a paternal and solicitous care; will shield his head in every day of battle—*will* give him to see America *free, flourishing, and happy*—and *will* adorn his fame, among latest posterity, with a Garland of Laurel, more verdant, blooming and enviable, than ever adorned the brow of a *Marlborough*!

The bearer of this line (if he should be indeed



so fortunate as to put it into your hand) is our worthy friend, Mr. Cornelius Durant, who is possessed of an ardent desire of having the honour of a short interview with General Washington; principally that he may have it to say, that he has seen and spoken to *the greatest man of this age*: and, indeed, considering Mr. Durant's personal worth; his uncommon zeal for, and attachment to the American cause; the losses he has sustained in attempting to assist her; and his extraordinary admiration of, and love to the General's character and person, few men more richly merit this indulgence. If you still exist, and exist near the General's person (and I have not yet seen your name among the list of the slain or the disgraced), you can easily procure him this honour — and I trust you will.

We are now blessed with, and certified of, the glorious news of Burgoyne's surrender to the immortal GATES; another bright star in the Constellation of American Heroes; and we are momentarily expecting to hear that General Washington has done something like the same by General Howe! But we yet tremble in suspense — and it is indeed a *painful one*. Probably

before this letter goes we shall hear more of the matter. Our general accounts are favourable; and while the *Chevaux de frize* are defended we have no fears about Philadelphia. May this campaign decide the matter!

By the time this reaches you, you will be (if you are at all) in winter quarters; and may perhaps be at leisure to write me a half folio, of which Mr. Durant will take care to write me duplicates, or triplicates, for fear of miscarriage.

A piece of mine, entitled "An Address to America, by a friend in a foreign government," has been sent to the Congress for publication (if approved). I know not yet its fate. It is, at least, an honestly designed and animating piece, but written incorrectly, and in a hurry. If you have seen it pray give me your sentiments about it; but let it be on a loose paper enclosed in your letter; for the knowledge of my being the author must be a profound secret here.

My wishes are, that the God of Armies may defend and protect you, and to cause you happily to survive, and to hand down to posterity the

present important scenes. Numbers here esteem you, and would join me in declaring themselves, as I do,

Dear Hamilton,  
Your ever affectionate friend and servant,  
HUGH KNOX.

TO OTHO H. WILLIAMS

11th June, 1779.

*Dear Williams,*—The General sends you four fresh horsemen to enable you to transmit him intelligence. The General will take the road you marched to your quarters.

Mind your eye, my dear boy, and if you have an opportunity, fight hard.

Your friend and servant,  
A. HAMILTON.

FROM COLONEL FLEURY

L'INFANTRY CAMP, 18th August, 1779.

*Dear Colonel,*—The officers of the two A Battalions of l'Infantry, which I actually command, have applied to me for ceasing to run over these

craggy mountains barefooted, and beg that I would write to headquarters to have an order from his Excellency to get one pair of shoes for each; the shoes they hint to are at New Windsor, and their intention is to pay for.

Do not be so greedy for shoes as for my blanket, and think that the most urgent necessity has determined their application; they are quite barefoot.

I am very respectfully, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

L. FLEURY.

N.B. As his Excellency could form a very advantageous idea of our being lucky in shoes by the appearance of the officers who dined to-day at headquarters, and were not quite without, I beg you would observe to him, if necessary, that each company had furnished a shoe for their dressing.

Si vous savez un mot de M. De La Luzerne dites le moi.

FROM JOHN LAURENS

December 18, 1779.

*My dear Hamilton,*— On my arrival in town, I was informed by the President, that congress had

suspended the business of appointing a secretary to their minister plenipotentiary at Versailles until my return, in hopes that I might still be prevailed upon to accept the office. I replied, that I thought my letter upon the subject sufficiently explicit, and assured him of my sincere desire to be excused from serving in that capacity at the present juncture of our affairs.

He urged the unanimity of the choice with respect to me—the difficulty of uniting the suffrages of all parties, in case of a new nomination, and the advantages of this union. Several delegates of congress declared to me the embarrassment of congress since I had declined. One, in particular, suggested to me his apprehension of interest being made for a late delegate of New-York, who is candidate for the office, and to whom the world in general allows greater credit for his abilities than his integrity; and said: “he was determined to oppose him with all his influence.” When I quitted town the sixteenth, these matters crowded into my mind. I fell into a train of serious reflections and self-examination,—endeavoured to investigate whether I had fulfilled the duties of a good citizen in the transaction. In

fine I agitated the grand question, whether a citizen has a right to decline any office to which his countrymen appoint him; upon what that right is founded, and whether it existed in my case.

After undergoing the severest conflict I ever experienced, sometimes reproaching, sometimes justifying myself, pursuing my journey, or turning retrograde, as the arguments on the one side or the other appeared to prevail, I determined that I had been deficient in the duties of a good citizen. I returned to Philadelphia, communicated my sentiments to the President and two other members; declared to them that I thought it incumbent on me, in the first place, to recommend a person equally qualified in point of integrity, and much better in point of ability. That if, unhappily, they could not agree on Colonel Hamilton, and that I was absolutely necessary to exclude a dangerous person, or to prevent pernicious delays, I should think it my duty to obey the orders of congress. The persons now in nomination, are, Colonel Hamilton, Mr. Lovell, Mr. G. Morris, Major Stewart. Great stress is laid upon the ability and integrity of the person to be employed in this commission. I have given my testimony

of you in this and the other equally essential points.

My love, as usual. Adieu.

JOHN LAURENS.

FROM LAURENS

CHARLESTON.

Ternant will relate to you how many violent struggles I have had between duty and inclination—how much my heart was with you, while I appeared to be most actively employed here. But it appears to me that I should be inexcusable in the light of a citizen, if I did not continue my utmost efforts for carrying the plan of the black levies into execution, while there remains the smallest hope of success.

Our army is reduced to nothing, almost, by the departure of the Virginians. Scott's arrival will scarcely restore us to our ancient number. If the enemy destine the reinforcements from Great Britain to this quarter, as in policy they ought to do, that number will be insufficient for the security of our country. The Governor, among other matters to be laid before the House of Assembly, intends

to propose the completing our continental battalions by drafts from the militia. This measure, I am told, is so unpopular that there is no hope of succeeding in it. Either this must be adopted, or the black levies, or the state will fall a victim to the improvidence of its inhabitants.

The House of Representatives have had a longer recess than usual, occasioned by the number of members in the field. It will be convened, however, in a few days. I intend to qualify, and make a final effort. Oh, that I were a Demosthenes! The Athenians never deserved a more bitter reprobation than our countrymen.

General Clinton's movement, and your march in consequence, made me wish to be with you. If anything important should be doing in your quarter, while I am doing daily penance here, and making successful harangues, I shall execrate my stars, and be out of humour with the world. I entreat you, my dear friend, write me as frequently as circumstances will permit, and enlighten me upon what is going forward.

Adieu. My love to our colleagues. I am afraid I was so thoughtless as to omit my remembrances to Gibbes. Tell him that I am his sincere well-



wisher, and hope to laugh with him again ere long.

Adieu again,

Yours ever,

JOHN LAURENS.

FROM LAURENS

1778, December.

*My dear Hamilton*, — You have seen and by this time considered, General Lee's infamous publication. I have collected some hints for an answer; but I do not think, either that I can rely upon my own knowledge of facts and style to answer him fully, or that it would be prudent to undertake it without counsel. An affair of this kind ought to be passed over in total silence, or answered in a masterly manner.

The ancient secretary is the *Recueil* of modern history and anecdotes, and will give them to us with candour, elegance, and perspicuity. The pen of Junius is in your hand; and I think you will, without difficulty, expose in his defence, letters, and last production, such a tissue of falsehood and inconsistency, as will satisfy the world and put him forever to silence.

Adieu, my dear boy: — I shall set out for camp to-morrow.

JOHN LAURENS.

TO JOHN LAURENS

Cold in my professions — warm in my friendships — I wish, my dear Laurens, it were in my power, by actions, rather than words, to convince you that I love you. I shall only tell you, that till you bade us adieu, I hardly knew the value you had taught my heart to set upon you. Indeed, my friend, it was not well done. You know the opinion I entertain of mankind; and how much it is my desire to preserve myself from particular attachments, and to keep my happiness independent of the caprices of others. You should not have taken advantage of my sensibility to steal into my affections without my consent. But as you have done it, and as we are generally indulgent to those we love, I shall not scruple to pardon the fraud you have committed, on one condition; that for my sake, if not for your own, you will continue to merit the partiality which you have so artfully instilled into me.

I have received your two letters; one from Phila-

delphia, the other from Chester. I am pleased with your success so far; and I hope the favourable omens that precede your application to the Assembly, may have as favourable an issue; provided the situation of affairs should require it, which I fear will be the case. But both for your country's sake, and for my own, I wish the enemy may be gone from Georgia before you arrive; and that you may be obliged to return, and share the fortunes of your old friends. In respect to the commission which you received from Congress, all the world must think your conduct perfectly right. Indeed, your ideas upon this occasion seem not to have their wonted accuracy; and you have had scruples, in a great measure, without foundation. By your appointment as aid-de-camp to the commander-in-chief, you had as much the rank of lieutenant-colonel as any officer in the line. Your receiving a commission as lieutenant-colonel, from the date of that appointment, does not in the least injure or interfere with one of them; unless, by virtue of it you are introduced into a particular regiment, in violation of the right of succession, which is not the case at present; neither is it a necessary consequence. As you were going to

command a battalion, it was proper you should have a commission; and if this commission had been dated posterior to your appointment as aide-de-camp, I should have considered it derogatory to your former rank, to mine, and to that of the whole corps. The only thing I see wrong in the affair is this: Congress by their conduct, both on the former and present occasion, appear to have intended to confer a privilege, an honour, a mark of distinction, a something upon you, which they withheld from other gentlemen of the family. This carries with it an air of preference, which, though we can all truly say we love your character and admire your military merit, cannot fail to give some of us uneasy sensations. But in this, my dear, I wish you to understand me well. The blame, if there is any, falls wholly upon congress. I repeat it, your conduct has been perfectly right, and even laudable;—you rejected the offer when you ought to have accepted it; and let me add, with a degree of over-scrupulous delicacy. It was necessary to your project. Your project was the public good; and I should have done the same. In hesitating, you have refined on the refinements of generosity.

There is a total stagnation of news here. Gates has refused the Indian command. Sullivan is come to take it. The former has lately given fresh proofs of his impudence, his folly, and his ——. 'Tis no great matter; but a peculiarity in the case prevents my saying what.

Fleury shall be taken care of. All the family send love. In this join the General and Mrs. Washington; and what is best, it is not in the style of ceremony, but sincerity.

#### TO LAURENS

September, 1780.

Since my return from Hartford, my dear Laurens, my mind has been too little at ease to permit me to write to you sooner. It has been wholly occupied by the affecting and tragic consequences of Arnold's treason. My feelings were never put to so severe a trial. You will no doubt have heard the principal facts before this reaches you; but there are particulars to which my situation gave me access, that cannot have come to your knowledge from public report, which I am persuaded you will find interesting.

From several circumstances, the project seems

to have originated with Arnold himself, and to have been long premeditated. The first overture is traced back to some time in June last. It was conveyed in a letter to Colonel Robinson, the substance of which was, that the ingratitude he had experienced from his country, concurring with other causes, had entirely changed his principles; that he now only sought to restore himself to the favour of his king, by some signal proof of his repentance, and would be happy to open a correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton for that purpose. About this period he made a journey to Connecticut; on his return from which to Philadelphia, he solicited the command of West Point, alleging that the effects of his wound had disqualified him for the active duties of the field. The sacrifice of this important post was the atonement he intended to make. General Washington hesitated the less to gratify an officer who had rendered such eminent services, as he was convinced the post might be safely intrusted to one who had given so many distinguished proofs of his bravery. In the beginning of August he joined the army, and renewed his application. The enemy at this juncture had embarked the greatest part of their

force on an expedition to Rhode-Island, and our army was in motion to compel them to relinquish the enterprise or to attack New-York in its weakened state. The General offered Arnold the left wing of the army, which he declined, on the pretext already mentioned, but not without visible embarrassment. He certainly might have executed the duties of such a temporary command, and it was expected from his enterprising temper that he would gladly have embraced so splendid an opportunity. But he did not choose to be diverted a moment from his favourite object; probably from an apprehension that some different disposition might have taken place which would have excluded him. The extreme solicitude he discovered to get possession of the post would have led to a suspicion of the treachery, had it been possible, from his past conduct, to have supposed him capable of it.

The correspondence thus begun, was carried on between Arnold and Major André, Adjutant General to the British army, in behalf of Sir Henry Clinton, under feigned signatures, and in a mercantile disguise. In an intercepted letter of Arnold, which lately fell into our hands, he pro-

poses an interview "to settle the risks and profits of the copartnership," and in the same style of metaphor intimates an expected augmentation of the garrison, and speaks of it as the means of extending their traffic. It appears by another letter, that André was to have met him on the lines, under the sanction of a flag, in the character of Mr. John Anderson. But some cause or other, not known, prevented this interview.

The twentieth of last month, Robinson and André went up the river in the Vulture, sloop of war. Robinson sent a flag to Arnold with two letters, one to General Putnam, enclosed in another to himself, proposing an interview with Putnam, or in his absence with Arnold, to adjust some private concerns. The one to General Putnam was evidently meant as a cover to the other, in case, by accident, the letter should have fallen under the inspection of a third person.

General Washington crossed the river on his way to Hartford, the day these dispatches arrived. Arnold, conceiving he must have heard of the flag, thought it necessary, for the sake of appearances, to submit the letters to him, and asked his opinion of the propriety of complying with the



request. The General, with his usual caution, though without the least surmise of the design, dissuaded him from it, and advised him to reply to Robinson, that whatever related to his private affairs must be of a civil nature, and could only properly be addressed to the civil authority: This reference fortunately deranged the plan, and was the first link in the chain of events that led to the detection. The interview could no longer take place in the form of a flag, but was obliged to be managed in a secret manner.

Arnold employed one Smith to go on board the Vulture the night of the twenty-second, to bring André on shore with a pass for Mr. John Anderson. André came ashore accordingly, and was conducted within a picket of ours to the house of Smith, where Arnold and he remained together in close conference all that night and the day following. At daylight in the morning, the commanding officer at King's Ferry, without the privity of Arnold, moved a couple of pieces of cannon to a point opposite to where the Vulture lay, and obliged her to take a more remote station. This event, or some lurking distrust, made the boatmen refuse to convey the two passengers back, and disconcerted

Arnold so much, that by one of those strokes of infatuation which often confound the schemes of men conscious of guilt, he insisted on André's exchanging his uniform for a disguise, and returning in a mode different from that in which he came. André, who had been undesignedly brought within our posts, in the first instance, remonstrated warmly against this new and dangerous expedient. But Arnold, persisting in declaring it impossible for him to return as he came, he at length reluctantly yielded to his direction, and consented to change his dress, and take the route he recommended. Smith furnished the disguise, and in the evening passed King's Ferry with him, and proceeded to Crompond, where they stopped the remainder of the night (at the instance of a militia officer), to avoid being suspected by him. The next morning they resumed their journey, Smith accompanying André a little beyond Pine's Bridge, where he left him. He had reached Tarrytown, when he was taken up by three militiamen, who rushed out of the woods, and seized his horse. At this critical moment, his presence of mind forsook him. Instead of producing his pass, which would have extricated him from our parties, and could have

done him no harm with his own, he asked the militiamen if they were of the upper or lower party, distinctive appellations known among the refugee corps. The militiamen replied, they were of the lower party; upon which he told them he was a British officer, and pressed them not to detain him as he was upon urgent business. This confession removed all doubt; and it was in vain he afterwards produced his pass. He was instantly forced off to a place of greater security; where after a careful search, there were found concealed in the feet of his stockings, several papers of importance delivered to him by Arnold. Among these there were a plan of the fortifications of West Point, a memorial from the engineer on the attack and defence of the place, returns of the garrison, cannon, and stores, copies of the minutes of a council of war held by General Washington a few weeks before. The prisoner at first was inadvertently ordered to Arnold; but on recollection, while still on the way, he was countermanded and sent to Old Salem.

The papers were enclosed in a letter to General Washington, which having taken a route different from that by which he returned, made a circuit,

that afforded leisure for another letter, through an ill-judged delicacy, written to Arnold, with information of Anderson's capture, to get to him an hour before General Washington arrived at his quarters, time enough to elude the fate that awaited him. He went down the river in his barge to the Vulture, with such precipitate confusion that he did not take with him a single paper useful to the enemy. On the first notice of the affair he was pursued, but much too late to be overtaken.

There was some colour for imagining it was a part of the plan to betray the General into the hands of the enemy. Arnold was very anxious to ascertain from him the precise day of his return, and the enemy's movements seem to have corresponded to this point. But if it was really the case it was very injudicious. The success must have depended on surprise, and as the officers at the advanced posts were not in the secret, their measures might have given the alarm, and General Washington, taking command of the post, might have rendered the whole scheme abortive. Arnold, it is true, had so dispersed the garrison as to have made a defence difficult, but not impracticable; and the acquisition of West Point was of such magni-

tude to the enemy, that it would have been unwise to connect it with any other object, however great, which might make the obtaining of it precarious.

Arnold, a moment before his setting out, went into Mrs. Arnold's apartment, and informed her that some transaction had just come to light, which must forever banish him from his country. She fell into a swoon at this declaration, and he left her in it to consult his own safety, till the servants, alarmed by her cries, came to her relief. She remained frantic all day, accusing every one who approached her with an intention to murder her child (an infant in her arms), and exhibiting every other mark of the most genuine and agonizing distress. Exhausted by the fatigue and tumult of her spirits, her frenzy subsided towards evening, and she sunk into all the sadness of affliction. It was impossible not to have been touched with her situation; every thing affecting in female tears, or in the misfortunes of beauty, every thing pathetic in the wounded tenderness of a wife, or in the apprehensive fondness of a mother, and, till I have reason to change the opinion, I will add, every thing amiable in suffering innocence, conspired to make her an object of sympathy to all who were present. She

experienced the most delicate attentions, and every friendly office, till her departure for Philadelphia.

André was, without loss of time, conducted to the headquarters of the army, where he was immediately brought before a board of general officers, to prevent all possibility of misrepresentation or cavil on the part of the enemy.

The board reported that he ought to be considered as a spy, and according to the laws and usages of nations, to suffer death, which was executed two days after.

Never, perhaps, did any man suffer death with more justice, or deserve it less. The first step he took after his capture, was to write a letter to General Washington, conceived in terms of dignity without insolence, and apology without meanness. The scope of it was to vindicate himself from the imputation of having assumed a mean character, for treacherous or interested purposes; asserting that he had been involuntarily an impostor; that contrary to his intention, which was to meet a person for intelligence on neutral ground, he had been betrayed within our posts, and forced into the vile condition of an enemy in disguise; soliciting only that to whatever rigour policy might devote him, a

decency of treatment might be observed to a person who, though unfortunate, had been guilty of nothing dishonourable. His request was granted in its full extent; for in the whole progress of the affair, he was treated with the most scrupulous delicacy. When brought before the board of officers he met with every mark of indulgence, and was required to answer no interrogatory which would even embarrass his feelings. On his part, while he carefully concealed everything that might implicate others, he frankly confessed all the facts relating to himself, and upon his confession, without the trouble of examining a witness, the board made their report. The members were not more impressed with the candour and firmness, mixed with a becoming sensibility which he displayed, than he was penetrated with their liberality and politeness. He acknowledged the generosity of their behaviour towards him in every respect, but particularly in this, in the strongest terms of manly gratitude. In a conversation with a gentleman who visited him after his trial, he said he flattered himself he had never been illiberal; but if there were any remains of prejudice in his mind, his present experience must obliterate them.

In one of the visits I made to him (and I saw him several times during his confinement) he begged me to be the bearer of a request to the General, for permission to send an open letter to Sir Henry Clinton. "I foresee my fate," said he, "and though I pretend not to play the hero, or to be indifferent about life, yet I am reconciled to whatever may happen, conscious that misfortune, not guilt, has brought it upon me. There is only one thing that disturbs my tranquillity. Sir Henry Clinton has been too good to me; he has been lavish of his kindness; I am bound to him by too many obligations, and love him too well to bear the thought that he should reproach himself, or others should reproach him, on the supposition of my having conceived myself obliged, by his instructions, to run the risk I did. I would not, for the world, leave a sting in his mind that should embitter his future days." He could scarce finish the sentence; bursting into tears, in spite of his efforts to suppress them, and with difficulty collected himself enough afterwards to add, "I wish to be permitted to assure him, I did not act under this impression, but submitted to a necessity imposed upon me, as contrary to my own inclination, as to his orders." His



request was readily complied with, and he wrote the letter annexed, with which I dare say you will be as much pleased as I am, both for the sentiment and diction.

When his sentence was announced to him, he remarked, that since it was his lot to die, there was still a choice in the mode, which would make a material difference to his feelings; and he would be happy, if possible, to be indulged with a professional death. He made a second application by letter, in concise but persuasive terms. It was thought this indulgence, being incompatible with the customs of war, could not be granted; and it was, therefore, determined, in both cases, to evade an answer, to spare him the sensations, which a certain knowledge of the intended mode would inflict.

In going to the place of execution, he bowed familiarly as he went along, to all those with whom he had been acquainted in his confinement. A smile of complacency expressed the supreme fortitude of his mind. Arrived at the fatal spot, he asked with some emotion, "Must I then die in this manner?" He was told it had been unavoidable. "I am reconciled to my fate," said he, "but not to the mode." Soon, however, recollecting himself, he

added, "It will be but a momentary pang;" and springing upon the cart, performed the last offices to himself with a composure that excited the admiration and melted the hearts of the beholders. Upon being told the final moment was at hand, and asked if he had anything to say, he answered, "Nothing but to request you will witness to the world, that I die like a brave man." Among the extraordinary circumstances that attended him, in the midst of his enemies, he died universally regretted and universally esteemed.

There was something singularly interesting in the character and fortunes of André. To an excellent understanding, well improved by education and travel, he united a peculiar elegance of mind and manners, and the advantage of a pleasing person. It is said he possessed a pretty taste for the fine arts, and had himself attained some proficiency in poetry, music, and painting. His knowledge appeared without ostentation, and embellished by a diffidence that rarely accompanies so many talents and accomplishments, which left you to suppose more than appeared.

His sentiments were elevated, and inspired esteem,—they had a softness that conciliated

affection. His elocution was handsome; his address easy, polite, and insinuating. By his merit he had acquired the unlimited confidence of his General, and was making a rapid progress in military rank and reputation. But in the height of his career, flushed with new hopes from the execution of a project the most beneficial to his party that could be devised, he was at once precipitated from the summit of prosperity, and saw all the expectations of his ambition blasted, and himself ruined.

The character I have given of him, is drawn partly from what I saw of him myself, and partly from information. I am aware, that a man of real merit is never seen in so favourable a light as through the medium of adversity. The clouds that surround him are shades that set off his good qualities. Misfortune cuts down the little vanities, that in prosperous times serve as so many spots in his virtues, and gives a tone of humility that makes his worth more amiable. His spectators, who enjoy a happier lot, are less prone to detract from it through envy; and are more disposed by compassion to give him the credit he deserves, and perhaps even to magnify it.

I speak not of André's conduct in this affair as a

philosopher, but as a man of the world. The authorized maxims and practices of war are the satires of human nature. They countenance almost every species of seduction, as well as violence; and the General who can make most traitors in the army of his adversary is frequently most applauded. On this scale we acquit André, while we would not but condemn him if we were to examine his conduct by the sober rules of philosophy and moral rectitude. It is, however, a blemish on his fame, that he once intended to prostitute a flag,—about this, a man of nice honour ought to have had a scruple; but the temptation was great. Let his misfortunes cast a veil over his error.

Several letters from Sir Henry Clinton, and others, were received in the course of the affair, feebly attempting to prove that André came out under the protection of a flag, with a passport from a general officer in actual service; and consequently, could not be justly detained. Clinton sent a deputation, composed of Lieutenant General Robinson, Mr. Elliot, and Mr. William Smith, to represent, as he said, the true state of Major André's case. General Greene met Robinson, and

had a conversation with him, in which he reiterated the pretence of a flag, urged André's release as a personal favour to Sir Henry Clinton, and offered any friend of ours in their power in exchange. Nothing could have been more frivolous than the plea which was used. The fact was, that besides the time, manner, object, of the interview, change of dress, and other circumstances, there was not a single formality customary with flags; and the passport was not to Major André, but to Mr. Anderson. But had there been, on the contrary, all the formalities, it would be an abuse of language to say, that the sanction of a flag, for corrupting an officer to betray his trust, ought to be respected. So unjustifiable a purpose would not only destroy its validity but make it an aggravation.

André himself has answered the argument by ridiculing and exploding the idea, in his examination before the board of officers. It was a weakness to urge it.

There was, in truth, no way of saving him. Arnold or he must have been the victim; the former was out of our power.

It was by some suspected, Arnold had taken his measures in such a manner, that if the inter-

view had been discovered in the act, it might have been in his power to sacrifice André to his own security. This surmise of double treachery made them imagine Clinton would be induced to give up Arnold for André; and a gentleman took occasion to suggest the expedient to the latter, as a thing that might be proposed by him. He declined it. The moment he had been capable of so much frailty I should have ceased to esteem him.

The infamy of Arnold's conduct, previous to his desertion, is only equalled by his baseness since. Besides the folly of writing to Sir Henry Clinton that André had acted under a passport from him, and according to his directions, while commanding officer of a post, and that therefore he did not doubt he would be immediately sent in, he had the effrontery to write to General Washington in the same spirit, with the addition of a menace of retaliation, if the sentence should be carried into execution. He has since acted the farce of sending in his resignation. This man is, in every sense, despicable. In addition to the scene of knavery and prostitution during his command in Philadelphia, which the late seizure of his papers has unfolded, the history of his command at West

Point is a history of little as well as great villainies. He practised every art of speculation; and even stooped to connexion with the sutlers of the garrison to defraud the public.

To his conduct, that of the captors of André formed a striking contrast. He tempted them with the offer of his watch, his horse, and any sum of money they should name. They rejected his offers with indignation; and the gold that could seduce a man high in the esteem and confidence of his country, who had the remembrance of past exploits, the motives of present reputation and future glory, to prop his integrity, had no charms for three simple peasants, leaning only on their virtue and an honest sense of their duty. While Arnold is handed down with execration to future times, posterity will repeat with reverence the names of Van Wart, Paulding, and Williams.

I congratulate my friend on our happy escape from the mischiefs with which this treason was big. It is a new comment on the value of an honest man, and, if it were possible, would endear you to me more than ever. Adieu.

A. HAMILTON.

## TO MISS SCHUYLER

September 25th, 1780.

. . . Arnold, hearing of the plot being detected, immediately fled to the enemy. I went in pursuit of him, but was much too late; and could hardly regret the disappointment when, on my return, I saw an amiable woman frantic with distress for the loss of a husband she tenderly loved, — a traitor to his country and his fame, — a disgrace to his connexions; it was the most affecting scene I ever was witness to. She, for a considerable time, lost herself. The General went up to see her, and she upbraided him with being in a plot to murder her child. One moment she raved, another she melted into tears. Sometimes she pressed her infant to her bosom, and lamented its fate, occasioned by the imprudence of its father, in a manner that would have pierced insensibility itself. All the sweetness of beauty, all the loveliness of innocence, all the tenderness of a wife, and all the fondness of a mother, showed themselves in her appearance and conduct. We have every reason to believe that she was entirely unacquainted with the plan,



and that the first knowledge of it was when Arnold went to tell her he must banish himself from his country and from her for ever. She instantly fell into a convulsion, and he left her in that situation.

This morning she is more composed. I paid her a visit, and endeavoured to soothe her by every method in my power; though you may imagine she is not easily to be consoled. Added to her other distresses, she is very apprehensive the resentments of her country will fall upon her (who is only unfortunate) for the guilt of her husband.

I have tried to persuade her that her fears are ill-founded; but she will not be convinced. She received us in bed, with every circumstance that would interest our sympathy, and her sufferings were so eloquent, that I wished myself her brother, to have a right to become her defender,—as it is I have entreated her to enable me to give her proofs of my friendship. Could I forgive Arnold for sacrificing his honour, reputation, and duty, I could not forgive him for acting a part that must have forfeited the esteem of so fine a woman. At present she almost forgets his crime in his misfortunes; and her horror at the guilt of the traitor,

is lost in her love of the man. But a virtuous mind cannot long esteem a base one, and time will make her despise, if it cannot make her hate.

### TO MISS SCHUYLER

TAPPAN, Oct. 2, 1780.

Poor André suffers to-day; everything that is amiable in virtue, in fortitude, in delicate sentiment, and accomplished manners pleads for him; but hard-hearted policy calls for a sacrifice. He must die — I send you my account of Arnold's affair, and to justify myself to your sentiments, I must inform you, that I urged a compliance with André's request to be shot, and I do not think it would have had an ill effect, but some people are only sensible to motives of policy, and sometimes, from a narrow disposition, mistake it.

When André's tale comes to be told, and present resentment is over, — the refusing him the privilege of choosing the manner of his death will be branded with too much obstinacy.

It was proposed to me to suggest to him the idea of an exchange for Arnold; but I knew I should have forfeited his esteem for doing it, and

therefore declined it. As a man of honour, he could not but reject it; and I would not for the world have proposed to him a thing which must have placed me in the unamiable light of supposing him capable of a meanness, or of not feeling, myself, the impropriety of the measure. I confess to you, I had the weakness to value the esteem of a dying man because I revered his merit.

TO ELIZABETH SCHUYLER<sup>1</sup>

October 13th, 1780.

I would not have you imagine, Miss, that I write you so often to gratify your wishes or please your vanity; but merely to indulge myself, and to comply with that restless propensity of my mind which will not be happy unless I am doing something in which you are concerned. This may seem a very idle disposition in a philosopher and a soldier, but I can plead illustrious examples in my justification. Achilles liked to have sacrificed Greece and his glory to a female captive, and Anthony lost a world for a woman. I am very sorry times are

<sup>1</sup> This letter was first published in Martha Lamb's "History of New York."

so changed as to oblige me to go to antiquity for my apology, but I confess, to the disgrace of the present time, that I have not been able to find as many who are as far gone as myself in the laudable Zeal of the fair sex. I suspect, however, if others knew the charm of my sweetheart as I do, I could have a great number of competitors. I wish I could give an idea of her. You can have no conception of how sweet a girl she is. It is only in my heart that her image is truly drawn. She has a lovely form and still more lovely mind. She is all goodness, the gentlest, the dearest, the tenderest of her sex. Ah, Betsey, how I love her!

Two days since I wrote to you, my dear girl, and sent the letter to the care of Colonel Morris: there was with it a bundle to your mamma, directed to your father, containing a cloak which Miss Livingston sent to my care. I enclosed you in that letter one to my friend Laurens with an account of Arnold's affair. I mention this for fear of a miscarriage as usual.

Well, my love, here is the middle of October; a few weeks more and you are mine; a sweet reflection to me—is it so to my charmer? Do you find yourself more or less anxious for the moment to arrive as it approaches? This is a good criterion

to determine the degree of your affection by. You have had an age for consideration, time enough for even a woman to know her mind in. Do you begin to repent or not? Remember you are going to do a very serious thing. For though our sex have generously given up a part of its prerogatives, and husbands have no longer the power of life and death, as the wiser husbands of former days had, yet we still retain the power of happiness and misery; and if you are prudent you will not trust the felicity of your future life to one in whom you have not good reason for implicit confidence. I give you warning—don't blame me if you make an injudicious choice—and if you should be disposed to retract, don't give me the trouble of a journey to Albany, and then do as did a certain lady I have mentioned to you, find out the day before we are to be married that you 'can't like the man'; but of all things I pray you don't make the discovery afterwards—for this would be worse than all. But I do not apprehend its being the case. I think we know each other well enough to understand each other's feelings, and to be sure our affection will not only last but be progressive.

I stopped to read over my letter — it is a motley mixture of fond extravagance and sprightly dullness: the truth is I am too much in love to be either reasonable or witty: I feel in the extreme; and when I attempt to speak of my feelings I rave. I have remarked to you before that real tenderness has also a tincture of sadness, and when I affect the lively my melting heart rebels. It is separated from you and it cannot be cheerful. Love is a sort of insanity and everything I write savors strongly of it; that you return it is the best proof of your madness also. I tell you, my Betsey, you are negligent; you do not write me often enough. Take more care of my happiness, for there is nothing your Hamilton would not do to promote yours.

To THE HON. JAMES DUANE

LIBERTY POLE, Sept. 3, 1780.

*Dear Sir,* — Agreeable to your request, and my promise, I sit down to give you my ideas of the defects of our present system, and the changes necessary to save us from ruin. They may, perhaps, be the reveries of a projector, rather than

the sober views of a politician. You will judge of them, and make what use you please of them.

The fundamental defect is a want of power in congress. It is hardly worth while to show in what this consists, as it seems to be universally acknowledged; or to point out how it has happened, as the only question is how to remedy it. It may, however, be said, that it has originated from three causes,—an excess of the spirit of liberty, which has made the particular states show a jealousy of all power not in their own hands; and this jealousy has led them to exercise a right of judging, in the last resort, of the measures recommended by congress, and of acting according to their own opinions of their propriety or necessity;—a diffidence in congress of their own powers, by which they have been timid and indecisive in their resolutions; constantly making concessions to the states, till they have scarcely left themselves the shadow of power;—a want of sufficient means at their disposal to answer the public exigencies, and of vigour to draw forth those means, which have occasioned them to depend on the states, individually, to fulfil their engagements with the army;

the consequence of which has been to ruin their influence and credit with the army, to establish its dependence on each state, separately, rather than *on them*; that is, than on the whole collectively.

It may be pleaded that congress had never any definitive powers granted them, and of course could exercise none, — could do nothing more than recommend. The manner in which congress was appointed would warrant, and the public good required, that they should have considered themselves as vested with full power *to preserve the republic from harm*.

They have done many of the highest acts of sovereignty, which were always cheerfully submitted to; the declaration of independence, the declaration of war, the levying an army, creating a navy, emitting money, making alliances with foreign powers, appointing a dictator, &c., &c.; all these were implications of a complete sovereignty, were never disputed, and ought to have been a standard for the whole conduct of administration. Undefined powers are discretionary powers, limited only by the object for which they were given; in the present case, the independence and freedom



of America. The confederation made no difference; for as it has not been generally adopted, it had no operation.

But, from what I recollect of it, congress have even descended from the authority which the spirit of that act gives them; while the particular states have no farther attended to it, than as it suited their pretensions and convenience. It would take too much time to enter into particular instances; each of which, separately, might appear inconsiderable, but united are of serious import. I only mean to remark, not to censure.

But the confederation itself is defective, and requires to be altered; it is neither fit for war, nor peace. The idea of an uncontrollable sovereignty in each state, over its internal police, will defeat the other powers given to congress, and make our union feeble and precarious. There are instances, without number, where acts necessary for the general good, and which rise out of the powers given to congress, must interfere with the internal police of the states; and there are as many instances in which the particular states, by arrangements of internal police, can effectually, though indirectly, counteract the arrangements of

congress. You have already had examples of this, for which I refer you to your own memory.

The confederation gives the states, individually, too much influence in the affairs of the army; they should have nothing to do with it.

The entire formation and disposal of our military forces ought to belong to congress. It is an essential cement of the union; and it ought to be the policy of congress to destroy all ideas of state attachments in the army, and make it look up wholly to them. For this purpose all appointments, promotions, and provisions whatsoever, ought to be made by them. It may be apprehended that this may be dangerous to liberty. But nothing appears more evident to me, than that we run much greater risk of having a weak and disunited Federal government, than one which will be able to usurp upon the rights of the people.

Already some of the lines of the army would obey their states in opposition to congress, notwithstanding the pains we have taken to preserve the unity of the army. If anything would hinder this, it would be the personal influence of the General — a melancholy and mortifying consideration. The

forms of our state constitutions must always give them great weight in our affairs, and will make it too difficult to blind them to the pursuit of a common interest, too easy to oppose whatever they do not like, and to form partial combinations, subversive of the general one. There is a wide difference between our situation and that of an empire under one simple form of government, distributed into counties, provinces, or districts, which have no legislatures, but merely magistratical bodies to execute the laws of a common sovereign. Here the danger is that the sovereign will have too much power, and oppress the parts of which it is composed. In our case, that of an empire composed of confederative states, each with a government completely organized within itself, having all the means to draw its subjects to a close dependence on itself, the danger is directly the reverse. It is that the common sovereign will not have power sufficient to unite the different members together, and direct the common forces to the interest and happiness of the whole.

The leagues among the old Grecian republics are a proof of this. They were continually at war with each other, and for want of union fell

a prey to their neighbours. They frequently held general councils, but their resolutions were no farther observed, than as they suited the interests and inclinations of all the parties, and, at length, they sank entirely into contempt.

The Swiss cantons are another proof of the doctrine. They have had wars with each other, which would have been fatal to them, had not the different powers in their neighbourhood been too jealous of one another, and too equally matched, to suffer either to take advantage of their quarrels. That they have remained so long united at all, is to be attributed to their weakness, to their poverty, and to the cause just mentioned. These ties will not exist in America. A little time hence, some of the states will be powerful empires; and we are so remote from other nations, that we shall have all the leisure and opportunity we can wish to cut each other's throats.

The Germanic corps might also be cited as an example in favour of the position.

The United Provinces may be thought to be one against it. But the family of the Stadtholders, whose authority is interwoven with the whole government, has been a strong link of union between

them. Their physical necessities, and the habits founded upon them, have contributed to it. Each province is too inconsiderable by itself to undertake anything. An analysis of their present constitution would show, that they have many ties which would not exist in ours; and that they are by no means a proper model for us.

Our own experience should satisfy us. We have felt the difficulty of drawing out the resources of the country, and inducing the states to combine in equal exertions for the common cause. The ill success of our last attempt is striking. Some have done a great deal; others little, or scarcely anything. The disputes about boundaries, &c., testify how flattering a prospect we have of future tranquillity, if we do not frame in time a confederacy capable of deciding the differences, and compelling the obedience of the respective members.

The confederation, too, gives the power of the purse too entirely to the state legislatures. It should provide perpetual funds in the disposal of congress, by a land tax, poll tax, or the like. All imposts upon commerce ought to be laid by congress, and appropriated to their use; for without certain revenues, a government can have no power;

that power which holds the purse strings absolutely, must rule. This seems to be a medium, which, without making congress altogether independent, will tend to give reality to its authority.

Another defect in our system is, want of method and energy in the administration. This has partly resulted from the other defect; but in a great degree from prejudice and the want of a proper executive. Congress have kept the power too much in their own hands, and have meddled too much with details of every sort. Congress is properly a deliberative corps, and it forgets itself when it attempts to play the executive. It is impossible that a body, numerous as it is, constantly fluctuating, can ever act with sufficient decision, or with system. Two thirds of the members, one-half the time cannot know what has gone before them, or what connexion the subject in hand has to what has been transacted on former occasions. The members who have been more permanent, will only give information that promotes the side they espouse, in the present case, and will as often mislead as enlighten. The variety of business must distract, and the proneness of every assembly to debate, must at all times delay.

Lately, congress, convinced of these inconveniences, have gone into the measure of appointing boards. But this is, in my opinion, a bad plan. A single man in each department of the administration, would be greatly preferable. It would give us a chance of more knowledge, more activity, more responsibility, and, of course, more zeal and attention. Boards partake of a part of the inconveniences of larger assemblies;—their decisions are slower, their energy less, their responsibilities more diffused. They will not have the same abilities and knowledge as an administration by single men. Men of the first pretensions will not so readily engage in them, because they will be less conspicuous, of less importance, have less opportunity of distinguishing themselves. The members of boards will take less pains to inform themselves and arrive at eminence, because they have fewer motives to do it. All these reasons conspire to give a preference to the plan of vesting the great executive departments of the state in the hands of individuals. As these men will be, of course, at all times under the direction of congress, we shall blend the advantages of a monarchy and republic in one constitution.

A question has been made, whether single men

could be found to undertake these offices. I think they could; because there would be then every thing to excite the ambition of candidates. But in order to this, congress, by their manner of appointing them, and the line of duty marked out, must show that they are in earnest in making these offices, offices of real trust and importance.

I fear a little vanity has stood in the way of these arrangements, as though they would lessen the importance of congress, and leave them nothing to do. But they would have precisely the same rights and powers as heretofore, happily disencumbered of the detail. They would have to inspect the conduct of their ministers, deliberate upon their plans, originate others for the public good,—only observing this rule, that they ought to consult their ministers, and get all the information and advice they could from them, before they entered into any new measures, or made changes in the old.

A third defect is, the fluctuating constitution of our army. This has been a pregnant source of evil;—all our military misfortunes, three-fourths of our civil embarrassments, are to be ascribed to it. The General has so fully enumerated the mischiefs, in a late letter to congress, that I could only



repeat what he has said, and will, therefore, refer you to that letter.

The imperfect and unequal provision made for the army, is a fourth defect, which you will find delineated in the same letter. Without a speedy change, the army must dissolve;—it is now a mob rather than an army,—without clothing, without pay, without provision, without morals, without discipline. We begin to hate the country for its neglect of us; the country begins to hate us for our oppressions of them. Congress have long been jealous of us; we have now lost all confidence in them, and give the worst construction to all they do. Held together by the slenderest ties, we are ripening for a dissolution.

The present mode of supplying the army by state purchases is not one of the least considerable defects of our system. It is too precarious a dependence, because the states will never be sufficiently impressed with our necessities. Each will make its own ease a primary object, the supply of the army a secondary one. The variety of channels through which the business is transacted, will multiply the number of persons employed, and the opportunities of embezzling public money. From the popular

spirit on which most of the governments turn, the state agents will be men of less character and ability; nor will there be so rigid a responsibility among them as there might easily be among those in the employ of the continent; of course not so much diligence, care, or economy. Very little of the money raised in the several states will go into the continental treasury, on pretence that it is all exhausted in providing the quotas of supplies, and the public will be without funds for the other demands of government. The expense will be ultimately much greater, and the advantage much smaller. We actually feel the insufficiency of this plan, and have reason to dread, under it, a ruinous extremity of want.

These are the principal defects in the present system that now occur to me. There are many inferior ones in the organization of particular departments, and many errors of administration, which might be pointed out; but the task would be troublesome and tedious, and if we had once remedied those I have mentioned, the others would not be attended with much difficulty.

I shall now propose the remedies which appear to me applicable to our circumstances, and neces-

sary to extricate our affairs from their present deplorable situation.

The first step must be to give congress powers competent to the public exigencies. This may happen in two ways: one by resuming and exercising the discretionary powers I suppose to have been, originally vested in them for the safety of the states, and resting their conduct on the candour of their countrymen and the necessity of the conjuncture; the other, by calling immediately a convention of all the states, with full authority to conclude finally upon a general confederation, stating to them beforehand explicitly the evils arising from a want of power in congress, and the impossibility of supporting the contest on its present footing, that the delegates may come possessed of proper sentiments, as well as proper authority, to give efficacy to the meeting. Their commission should include a right of vesting congress with the whole or a proportion of the unoccupied lands, to be employed for the purpose of raising a revenue, reserving the jurisdiction to the states by whom they are granted.

The first plan, I expect, will be thought too bold an expedient by the generality of congress; and,

indeed, their practice hitherto has so riveted the opinion of their want of power, that the success of this experiment may very well be doubted.

I see no objection to the other mode that has any weight in competition with the reasons for it. The convention should assemble the first of November next; the sooner the better; our disorders are too violent to admit of a common or lingering remedy. The reasons for which I require them to be vested with plenipotentiary authority are, that the business may suffer no delay in the execution, and may in reality come to effect. A convention may agree upon a confederation; the states, individually, hardly ever will. We must have one, at all events, and a vigorous one, if we mean to succeed in the contest and be happy hereafter. As I said before, to engage the states to comply with this mode, congress ought to confess to them, plainly and unanimously, the impracticability of supporting our affairs on the present footing, and without a solid coercive union. I ask that the convention should have a power of vesting the whole or a part of the unoccupied lands in congress, because it is necessary that body should have some property, as a fund for the arrangements of

finance; and I know of no other kind that can be given them.

The confederation, in my opinion, should give congress a complete sovereignty; except as to that part of internal police which relates to the rights of property and life among individuals, and to raising money by internal taxes. It is necessary that everything belonging to this should be regulated by the state legislatures. Congress should have complete sovereignty in all that relates to war, peace, trade, finance, and to the management of foreign affairs; the right of declaring war, of raising armies, officering, paying them, directing their motions in every respect; of equipping fleets, and doing the same with them; of building fortifications, arsenals, magazines, &c., &c.; of making peace on such conditions as they think proper; of regulating trade, determining with what countries it shall be carried on; granting indulgences; laying prohibitions on all the articles of export or import; imposing duties, granting bounties and premiums for raising, exporting or importing; and applying to their own use the product of these duties, only giving credit to the states on whom they are raised in the general account of revenues and expense;

instituting admiralty courts, &c.; of coining money, establishing banks on such terms, and with such privileges, as they think proper; appropriating funds, and doing whatever else relates to the operations of finance; transacting everything with foreign nations; making alliances, offensive and defensive, treaties of commerce, &c., &c.

The confederation should provide certain perpetual revenues, productive and easy of collection; a land tax, poll tax, or the like, which, together with the duties on trade, and the unlocated lands, would give congress a substantial existence, and a stable foundation for their schemes of finance. What more supplies were necessary, should be occasionally demanded of the states, in the present mode of quotas.

The second step I would recommend is, that congress should instantly appoint the following great officers of state: A Secretary for Foreign Affairs; a President of War; a President of Marine; A Financier; a President of Trade; instead of this last, a Board of Trade may be preferable, as the regulations of trade are slow and guarded, and require prudence and experience, (more than other qualities,) for which boards are very well adapted.

Congress should choose for these offices, men of the first abilities, property, and character, in the continent; and such as have had the best opportunities of being acquainted with the several branches. General Schuyler, whom you mentioned, would make an excellent President of War; General McDougal a very good President of Marine; Mr. Robert Morris would have many things in his favour for the department of Finance. He could, by his own personal influence, give great weight to the measures he should adopt. I dare say, men equally capable may be found for the other departments.

I know not if it would not be a good plan to let the Financier be President of the Board of Trade; but he should only have a casting voice in determining questions there. There is a connexion between trade and finance, which ought to make the director of one acquainted with the other; but the financier should not direct the affairs of trade, because, for the sake of acquiring reputation by increasing the revenues, he might adopt measures that would depress trade. In what relates to finance he should be alone.

These officers should have nearly the same

powers and functions as those in France analogous to them, and each should be chief in his department, with subordinate boards, composed of assistants, clerks, &c., execute his orders.

In my opinion, a plan of this kind would be of inconceivable utility to our affairs; its benefits would be very speedily felt. It would give new life and energy to the operations of government. Business would be conducted with despatch, method, and system. A million of abuses now existing would be corrected, and judicious plans would be formed and executed for the public good.

Another step of immediate necessity is, to recruit the army for the war, or at least for three years. This must be done by a mode similar to that which is practiced in Sweden. There the inhabitants are thrown into classes of sixteen, and when the sovereign wants men each of these classes must furnish one. They raise a fixed sum of money, and if one of the class is willing to become a soldier, he receives the money and offers himself a volunteer; if none is found to do this, a draft is made, and he on whom the lot falls receives the money and is obliged to serve. The minds of the people are prepared for a thing of this kind; the



heavy bounties they have been obliged to pay for men to serve a few months must have disgusted them with this mode, and made them desirous of another, that will, once for all, answer the public purposes, and obviate a repetition of the demand. It ought by all means to be attempted; and congress should frame a general plan, and press the execution upon the states. When the confederation comes to be framed, it ought to provide for this, by a fundamental law; and hereafter there would be no doubt of the success. But we cannot now wait for this: we want to replace the men whose time of service will expire the first of January; for then, without this, we shall have no army remaining, and the enemy may do what they please. The General, in his letter already quoted, has assigned the most substantial reasons for paying immediate attention to this point.

Congress should endeavour, both upon their credit in Europe, and by every possible exertion in this country, to provide clothing for their officers, and should abolish the whole system of state supplies. The making good the depreciation of the currency, and all other compensations to the army, should be immediately taken up by congress,

and not left to the states; if they would have the accounts of depreciation liquidated, and governmental certificates given for what is due, in specie or an equivalent to specie, it would give satisfaction, appointing periodical settlements for future depreciation.

The placing the officers upon half-pay, during life, would be a great stroke of policy, and would give congress a stronger tie upon them than anything else they can do. No man, that reflects a moment, but will prefer a permanent provision of this kind, to any temporary compensation; nor is it opposed to economy; the difference between this, and what has already been done, will be insignificant. The benefit of it to the widows, should be confined to those whose husbands die during the war. As to the survivors, not more than one half, on the usual calculation of men's lives, will exceed the seven years for which the half-pay is already established. Besides this, whatever may be the visionary speculations of some men at this time, we shall find it indispensable, after the war, to keep on foot a considerable body of troops; and all the officers retained for this purpose must be deducted out of the half-pay list. If anyone will take the pains to

calculate the expense on these principles, I am persuaded he will find the addition of expense from the establishment proposed, by no means a national object.

The advantages of securing the attachment of the army to congress, and binding them to the service, by substantial ties are immense.

We should then, have discipline ; an army, in reality, as well as in name. Congress would then have a solid basis of authority and consequence ; for with me it is an axiom, that in our constitution an army is essential to the American union.

The providing of supplies is the pivot of everything else ; (though a well constituted army would not in a small degree conduce to this, by giving consistency and weight to government,) there are four ways, all of which must be united, — a foreign loan, — heavy pecuniary taxes, — a tax in kind, — a bank founded on public and private credit.

As to a foreign loan, Congress, I dare say, are doing everything in their power to obtain it. The most effectual way will be, to tell France that without it we must make terms with Great Britain. This must be done with plainness and firmness, but with respect and without petulance ; not as a menace,

but as a candid declaration of our circumstances. We need not fear to be deserted by France; her interest and honour are too deeply involved in our fate; and she can make no possible compromise. She can assist us, if she is convinced it is absolutely necessary, either by lending us, herself, or by becoming our surety, or by influencing Spain. It has been to me astonishing, how any man could have doubted, at any period of our affairs, of the necessity of a foreign loan. It was self-evident that we had not a fund of wealth in this country, capable of affording revenues equal to the expenses. We must, then, create artificial revenues, or borrow; the first was done, but it ought to have been foreseen that the expedient could not last, and we should have provided in time for its failure.

Here was an error of congress. I have good reason to believe that measures were not taken in earnest early enough to procure a loan abroad: I give you my honour, that from our first outset, I thought as I do now; and wished for a foreign loan, not only because I foresaw that it would be essential, but because I considered it a tie upon the nation from which it was derived, and as a mean to prop our cause in Europe.

Concerning the necessity of heavy pecuniary taxes, I need say nothing, as it is a point in which everybody is agreed; nor is there any danger that the product of any taxes raised in this way will overburthen the people, or exceed the wants of the public. Indeed, if all the paper in circulation were drawn annually into the treasury, it would neither do one nor the other.

As to a tax in kind, the necessity of it results from this principle,—that the money in circulation is not a sufficient representative of that part of the products of the country, which it is bound to contribute to the support of the public. The public, therefore, to obtain its due, or to satisfy its just demands and its wants, must call for a part of these products themselves. This is done in all those countries which are not commercial; in Russia, Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, &c., and is peculiarly necessary in our case.

Congress, in calling for specific supplies, seem to have had this in view; but their intention has not been answered. The states, in general, have undertaken to furnish the supplies by purchase,—a mode, as I have observed, attended with every inconvenience, and subverting the principle on

which the supplies were demanded,—the insufficiency of our circulating medium, as a representative for the labour and commodities of the country. It is, therefore, necessary, that congress should be more explicit; should form the outlines of a plan for a tax in kind, and recommend it to the states, as a measure of absolute necessity.

The general idea I have of a plan is, that a respectable man should be appointed by the state in each county to collect the taxes, and form magazines; that congress should have in each state an officer to superintend the whole, and that the state collectors should be subordinate and responsible to them. This continental superintendent might be subject to the general direction of the quarter-master-general, or not, as might be deemed best; but if not subject to him, he should be obliged to make monthly returns to the President at War, who should instruct him what proportion to deliver to the quarter-master-general. It may be necessary that the superintendents should sometimes have power to dispose of the articles in their possession, on public account; for it would happen, that the contributions, in places remote from the army, could not be transported to the

theatre of operations without too great expense; in which case, it would be eligible to dispose of them, and purchase with the money so raised in the counties near the immediate seat of war.

I know the objections which may be raised to this plan — its tendency to discourage industry and the like; but necessity calls for it; we cannot proceed without, and less evils must give place to greater. It is, besides, practiced with success in other countries, and why not in this? It may be said, the examples cited are from nations under despotic governments, and that the same would not be practicable with us; but I contend, where the public good is evidently the object, more may be effected in governments like ours than in any other. It has been a constant remark, that free countries have ever paid the heaviest taxes; the obedience of a free people to general laws, however hard they bear, is ever more perfect than that of slaves to the arbitrary will of a prince. To this, it may be added, that Sweden was always a free government, and is so now, in a great degree, notwithstanding the late revolution.

How far it may be practicable to erect a bank

on the faint credit of the republic, and of individuals, can only be certainly determined by the experiment; but it is of so much importance that the experiment ought to be fully tried. When I saw the subscriptions going on to the bank established for supplying the army, I was in hopes it was only the embryo of a more permanent and extensive establishment. But I have reason to believe I shall be disappointed. It does not seem to be at all conducted on the true principles of a bank. The directors of it are purchasing with their stock, instead of bank notes as I expected; in consequence of which, it must turn out to be a mere subscription of a particular sum of money, for a particular purpose.

Paper credit never was long supported in any country, on a national scale, where it was not founded on the joint basis of public and private credit. An attempt to establish it on public credit alone, in France, under the auspices of Mr. Law, nearly ruined the kingdom. We have seen the effects of it in America; and every successive experiment proves the futility of the attempt. Our new money is depreciating almost as fast as the old, though it has, in some states, as real funds as



paper money ever had. The reason is, that the moneyed men have not an immediate interest to uphold its credit. They may even, in many ways, find it their interest to undermine it. The only certain manner to obtain a permanent paper credit, is to engage the moneyed interest immediately in it, by making them contribute the whole or part of the stock, and giving them the whole or part of the profits.

The invention of banks, on the modern principle, originated in Venice. There, the public, and a company of moneyed men, are mutually concerned. The Bank of England unites public authority and faith, with private credit; and hence we see what a vast fabric of paper credit is raised on a visionary basis. Had it not been for this, England would never have found sufficient funds to carry on her wars; but with the help of this, she has done, and is doing, wonders. The Bank of Amsterdam is on a similar foundation.

And why cannot we have an American bank? Are our moneyed men less enlightened to their own interest, or less enterprising in the pursuit? I believe the fault is in government, which does not exert itself to engage them in such a scheme.

It is true, the individuals in America are not very rich; but this would not prevent their instituting a bank; it would only prevent its being done with such ample funds as in other countries. Have they not sufficient confidence in the government, and in the issue of the cause? Let the government endeavour to inspire that confidence, by adopting the measures I have recommended, or others equivalent to them. Let it exert itself to procure a solid confederation—to establish a good plan of executive administration,—to form a permanent military force,—to obtain, at all events, a foreign loan. If these things were in a train of vigorous execution, it would give a new spring to our affairs; government would recover its respectability, and individuals would renounce their diffidence.

The object I should propose to myself, in the first instance, from a bank, would be an auxiliary mode of supplies; for which purpose contracts should be made between government and the bank, on terms liberal and advantageous to the latter. Everything should be done, in the first instance, to encourage the bank; after it gets well established it will take care of itself, and

government may make the best terms it can, for itself.

The first step to establishing the bank, will be to engage a number of moneyed men of influence to relish the project, and make it a business. The subscribers to that lately established, are the fittest persons that can be found; and their plan may be interwoven.

The outlines of my plan would be to open subscriptions, in all the states, for the stock, which we will suppose to be one million of pounds. Real property, of every kind, as well as specie, should be deemed good stock; but at least a fourth part of the subscription should be in specie or plate. There should be one great company, in three divisions; in Virginia, Philadelphia, and Boston; or two at Philadelphia and Boston. The bank should have a right to issue bank notes, bearing two per cent. interest for the whole of their stock; but not to exceed it. These notes may be payable every three months, or oftener; and the faith of government must be pledged for the support of the bank. It must, therefore, have a right, from time to time, to inspect its operations; and must appoint inspectors for the purpose.

The advantages of the bank may consist in this: in the profits of the contracts made with government, which should bear interest, to be annually paid in specie; in the loan of money at interest, say six per cent. in purchasing lives by annuities, as practiced in England, &c. The benefit resulting to the company is evident, from the consideration, that they may employ in circulation a great deal more money than they have specie in stock, on the credit of the real property which they will have in other use. This money will be employed, either in fulfilling their contracts with the public, by which, also, they will gain a profit, or in loans, at an advantageous interest, or in annuities.

The bank may be allowed to purchase plate and bullion, and coin money, allowing government a part of the profit.

I make the bank notes bear interest, to obtain a readier currency, and to induce the holders to prefer them to specie, to prevent too great a run upon the bank, at any time, beyond its ability to pay.

If government can obtain a foreign loan, it should lend to the bank, on easy terms, to extend its influence, and facilitate a compliance with its

engagements. If government could engage the states to raise a sum of money in specie, to be deposited in bank in the same manner, it would be of the greatest consequence. If government could prevail on the enthusiasm of the people, to make a contribution in plate, for the same purpose, it would be a master stroke. Things of this kind sometimes succeed in popular contests; and if undertaken with address, I should not despair of its success; but I should not be sanguine.

The bank may be instituted for a term of years, by way of trial; and the particular privilege of coining money may be for a term still shorter.

A temporary transfer of it to a particular company can have no inconvenience, as the government are in no condition to improve this resource; nor could it, in our circumstances, be an object to it, though with the industry of a knot of individuals, it might be a valuable one to them.

A bank of this kind, even in its commencement, would answer the most valuable purposes to government, and to the proprietors; in its progress the advantages will exceed calculation. It will promote commerce, by furnishing a more extensive medium, which we greatly want, in our circum-

stances. I mean a more extensive, valuable medium. We have an enormous nominal one at this time; but it is only a name.

In the present unsettled state of things, in this country, we can hardly draw inferences, from what has happened in others; otherwise I should be certain of the success of this scheme; but I think it has enough in its favour to be worthy of trial.

I have only skimmed the surface of the different subjects I have introduced. Should the plans recommended come into contemplation in earnest, and you desire my farther thoughts, I will endeavour to give them more form and particularity.

I am persuaded a solid confederation, a permanent army, a reasonable prospect of subsisting it, would give us treble consideration in Europe, and produce a peace this winter.

If a convention is called, the minds of all the states and the people ought to be prepared to receive its determinations by sensible and popular writings, which should conform to the views of congress. There are epochs in human affairs, when *novelty* even is useful. If a general opinion prevails that the old way is bad, whether true or false, and this obstructs or relaxes the operations

of the public service, a change is necessary if it be but for the sake of change. This is exactly the case now. 'Tis an universal sentiment that our present system is a bad one, and that things do not go right on this account. The measure of a convention would revive the hopes of the people, and give a new direction to their passions, which may be improved in carrying points of substantial utility. The eastern states have already pointed out this mode to congress: they ought to take the hint and anticipate the others.

And in future, my dear sir, two things let me recommend, as fundamental rules for the conduct of congress: to attach the army to them by every motive,—to maintain an authority (not domineering) in all their measures with the states. The manner in which a thing is done, has more influence than is commonly imagined. Men are governed by opinion: this opinion is as much influenced by appearances as by realities. If a government appears to be confident of its own powers, it is the surest way to inspire the same confidence in others. If it is diffident, it may be certain there will be a still greater diffidence in

others, and that its authority will not only be distrusted, controverted, but contemned.

I wish, too, congress would always consider, that a kindness consists as much in the manner as in the thing. The best things, done hesitatingly, and with an ill grace, lose their effect, and produce disgust rather than satisfaction or gratitude. In what congress have at any time done for the army, they have commonly been too late. They have seemed to yield to importunity, rather than to sentiments of justice, or to a regard to the accommodation of their troops. An attention to this idea is of more importance than it may be thought. I, who have seen all the workings and progress of the present discontents, am convinced that a want of this has not been among the most inconsiderable causes.

You will perceive, my dear sir, this letter is hastily written, and with a confidential freedom, not as to a member of congress, whose feelings may be sore at the prevailing clamour; but as to a friend who is in a situation to remedy public disorders,—who wishes for nothing so much as truth, and who is desirous for information, even from those less capable of judging than himself.



I have not even time to correct and copy, and only enough to add, that I am, very truly and affectionately, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

TO GENERAL SCHUYLER

HEAD QUARTERS, NEW WINDSOR,

February 18th, 1781.

*My dear Sir,*—Since I had the pleasure of writing you last, an unexpected change has taken place in my situation. I am no longer a member of the General's family. This information will surprise you, and the manner of the change will surprise you more. Two days ago, the General and I passed each other on the stairs;—he told me he wanted to speak to me,—I answered that I would wait upon him immediately. I went below and delivered Mr. Tilghman a letter to be sent to the commissary, containing an order of a pressing and interesting nature.

Returning to the General, I was stopped on the way by the Marquis de La Fayette and we conversed together about a minute on a matter

of business. He can testify how impatient I was to get back, and that I left him in a manner which, but for our intimacy, would have been more than abrupt. Instead of finding the General, as is usual, in his room, I met him at the head of the stairs, where accosting me in an angry tone, "Colonel Hamilton, (said he,) you have kept me waiting at the head of the stairs these ten minutes; — I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect." I replied without petulancy, but with decision, "I am not conscious of it, sir, but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part." "Very well, sir, (said he,) if it be your choice," or something to this effect, and we separated. I sincerely believe my absence, which gave so much umbrage, did not last two minutes.

In less than an hour after, Tilghman came to me in the General's name, assuring me of his great confidence in my abilities, integrity, usefulness, &c., and of his desire, in a candid conversation, to heal a difference which could not have happened but in a moment of passion. I requested Mr. Tilghman to tell him, — 1st. That I had taken my resolution in a manner not to be revoked. 2d. That as a

conversation could serve no other purpose than to produce explanations, mutually disagreeable, though I certainly would not refuse an interview, if he desired it, yet I would be happy, if he would permit me to decline it. 3d. That though determined to leave the family, the same principles which had kept me so long in it, would continue to direct my conduct towards him when out of it. 4th. That, however, I did not wish to distress him, or the public business, by quitting him before he could derive other assistance by the return of some of the gentlemen who were absent. 5th. And that in the mean time, it depended on him, to let our behaviour to each other be the same as if nothing had happened. He consented to decline the conversation, and thanked me for my offer of continuing my aid in the manner I had mentioned.

I have given you so particular a detail of our difference, from the desire I have to justify myself in your opinion. Perhaps you may think I was precipitate in rejecting the overture made by the General to an accommodation. I assure you, my dear sir, it was not the effect of resentment; it was the deliberate result of maxims I had long formed for the government of my own conduct.

I always disliked the office of an aid-de-camp, as having in it a kind of personal dependence. I refused to serve in this capacity with two Major Generals, at an early period of the war. Infected, however, with the enthusiasm of the times, an idea of the General's character overcame my scruples, and induced me to accept his invitation to enter into his family. It has been often with great difficulty that I have prevailed upon myself not to renounce it; but while, from motives of public utility, I was doing violence to my feelings, I was always determined, if there should ever happen a breach between us, never to consent to an accommodation. I was persuaded, that when once that nice barrier, which marked the boundaries of what we owed to each other, should be thrown down, it might be propped again, but could never be restored.

The General is a very honest man;—his competitors have slender abilities, and less integrity. His popularity has often been essential to the safety of America, and is still of great importance to it. These considerations have influenced my past conduct respecting him, and will influence my future;—I think it is necessary he should be supported.

His estimation in your mind, whatever may be its amount, I am persuaded has been formed on principles, which a circumstance like this cannot materially affect; but if I thought it could diminish your friendship for him, I should almost forego the motives that urge me to justify myself to you. I wish what I have said to make no other impression, than to satisfy you I have not been in the wrong. It is also said in confidence, as a public knowledge of the breach would, in many ways, have an ill effect. It will, probably, be the policy of both sides to conceal it, and cover the separation with some plausible pretext. I am importuned by such of my friends as are privy to the affair, to listen to a reconciliation; but my resolution is unalterable.

As I cannot think of quitting the army during the war, I have a project of re-entering into the artillery, by taking Lieutenant Colonel Forrest's place, who is desirous of retiring on half pay. I have not, however, made up my mind on this head, as I should be obliged to come in the youngest lieutenant colonel instead of the eldest, which I ought to have been by natural succession, had I remained in the corps; and, at the same time, to resume studies

relative to the profession, which to avoid inferiority, must be laborious.

If a handsome command in the campaign in the light infantry should offer itself, I shall balance between this and the artillery. My situation in the latter would be more solid and permanent; but as I hope the war will not last long enough to make it progressive, this consideration has the less force. A command for the campaign would leave me the winter to prosecute studies relative to my future career in life. I have written to you on this subject with all the freedom and confidence to which you have a right, and with an assurance of the interest you take in all that concerns me.

Very sincerely and affectionately,

I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

To MRS. HAMILTON

August, 1781.

In my last letter I informed you that there was a greater prospect of activity now, than there had been heretofore. I did this to prepare your mind for an event, which, I am sure, will give you pain.

I begged your father at the same time to intimate to you by degrees the probability of its taking place. I used this method to prevent a surprise which might be too severe to you. A part of the army, my dear girl, is going to Virginia, and I must of necessity be separated at a much greater distance from my beloved wife. I cannot announce the fatal necessity without feeling everything that a fond husband can feel. I am unhappy;—I am unhappy beyond expression. I am unhappy because I am to be so remote from you; because I am to hear from you less frequently than I am accustomed to do. I am miserable because I know you will be so; I am wretched at the idea of flying so far from you, without a single hour's interview, to tell you all my pains and all my love. But I cannot ask permission to visit you. It might be thought improper to leave my corps at such a time and upon such an occasion. I must go without seeing you,—I must go without embracing you:—alas! I must go. But let no idea, other than of the distance we shall be asunder, disquiet you. Though I said the prospects of activity will be greater, I said it to give your expectations a different turn, and prepare you for

something disagreeable. It is ten to one that our views will be disappointed, by Cornwallis retiring to South Carolina by land. At all events, our operations will be over by the latter end of October, and I will fly to my home. Don't mention I am going to Virginia.

And a few days later, from the 'head of the Elk, he writes:—

Yesterday, my lovely wife, I wrote to you enclosing you a letter in one to your father, to the care of Mr. Morris. To-morrow the post sets out, and to-morrow we embark for York Town. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of writing you a few lines. Constantly uppermost in my thoughts and affections, I am happy only when my moments are devoted to some office that respects you. I would give the world to be able to tell you all I feel, and all I wish, but consult your own heart and then you will know mine. What a world will soon be between us! To support the idea all my fortitude is insufficient. What must be the case with you who have the most female of female hearts? I sink at the perspective of your distress, and I look to heaven to be your guardian and supporter.



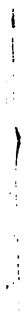
Circumstances which have just come to my knowledge, assure me that our operations will be expeditious, as well as our success certain. Early in November, as I promised you, we shall certainly meet. Cheer yourself with this idea, and with the assurance of never more being separated. Every day confirms me in the intention of renouncing public life, and devoting myself wholly to you. Let others waste their time and their tranquillity in a vain pursuit of power and glory;—be it my object to be happy in a quiet retreat, with my better angel.

And from Annapolis: —

How checquered is human life? — how precarious is happiness? — how easily do we often part with it for a shadow? These are the reflections that frequently intrude themselves upon me, with a painful application. I am going to do my duty. Our operations will be so conducted as to economize the lives of men. Exert your fortitude and rely upon heaven.



ALEXANDER HAMILTON.



## FROM COLONEL HARRISON

NEW WINDSOR, 1781.

I came here, my dear Hamilton, on Friday night to bid adieu to the General, to you, and to my other friends as a military man, and regretted much that I had not the happiness of seeing you. To-morrow I am obliged to depart, and it is possible our separation may be for ever. But be this as it may, it can only be with respect to our persons, for as to affection, mine for you will continue to my latest breath. This event will probably surprise you, but from your knowledge of me, I rely you will conclude at the instant, that no light considerations would have taken me from the army; and, I think, I might safely have rested the matter here. However, as the friendship between us gives you a claim to something more, and as I am not indifferent about character, and shall be anxious to have the esteem of all who are good and virtuously great, I shall detail to you, my friend, the more substantial reasons which have led to my present conduct. I go from the army, then, because I have found, on examination, that my little fortune, earned by an

honest and hard industry, was becoming embarrassed; to attend to the education of my children; . . . and because the State of Maryland, in a flattering manner, have been pleased to appoint me to a place, very respectable in its nature, corresponding to my former, and interesting to my whole future life and support:—they have appointed me to the chair of the Supreme Court. These, my friend, are the motives to my present resolution. My own feelings are satisfied on the occasion, though I cannot but regret parting with the most valuable acquaintances I have, and I hope they will justify me most fully to you, my Hamilton, especially when you consider the time I have been in the service, and the compensation I have received. Adieu.

Yours, in haste, most affectionately,

ROBT. H. HARRISON.

### **III**

## **LAW, POLITICS, AND DOMESTICITY**

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

## TO MEADE

PHILADELPHIA, March, 1782.

A half hour since brought me the pleasure of your letter of December last. It went to Albany and came from thence to this place. I heartily felicitate you on the birth of your daughter. I can well conceive your happiness upon that occasion, by that which I felt on a similar one.

Indeed, the sensations of a tender father of the child of a beloved mother, can only be conceived by those who have experienced them.

Your heart, my Meade, is peculiarly formed for enjoyments of this kind. You have every right to be a happy husband, a happy father. You have every prospect of being so. I hope your felicity may never be interrupted.

You cannot imagine how entirely domestic I am growing. I lose all tastes for the pursuits of ambition. I sigh for nothing but for the company of my wife and my baby. The ties of duty alone, or imagined duty, keep me from renouncing public life altogether. It is, however, probable I may not be any longer actively engaged in it.



I have explained to you the difficulties I met with in obtaining a command last campaign. I thought it incompatible with the delicacy due to myself to make any application this campaign. I have expressed this sentiment in a letter to the General, and, retaining my rank only, have relinquished the emoluments of my commission, declaring myself, notwithstanding, ready at all times to obey the calls of the public. I do not expect to hear any of these, unless the state of our affairs should change for the worse; and lest, by any unforeseen accident that should happen, I choose to keep myself in a situation again to contribute my aid. This prevents a total resignation.

You were right in supposing I neglected to prepare what I promised you at Philadelphia. The truth is, I was in such a hurry to get home, that I could think of nothing else. As I set out to-morrow morning for Albany, I cannot, from this place, send you the matter you wish.

Imagine, my dear Meade, what pleasure it *must* give Eliza and myself to know that Mrs. Meade interests herself in us. Without a personal acquaintance, we have been long attached to her. My visit at Mr. Fitzhugh's confirmed my partiality.

Betsey is so fond of your family, that she proposes to form a match between her boy and your girl, provided you will engage to make the latter as amiable as her mother.

Truly, my dear Meade, I often regret that fortune has cast our residence at such a distance from each other. It would be a serious addition to my happiness if we lived where I could see you every day; but fate has determined it otherwise. I am a little hurried, and can only request, in addition, that you will present me most affectionately to Mrs. Meade, and believe me to be, with the warmest and most unalterable friendship,

Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

To LAURENS

August 15th, 1782.

I received with great pleasure, my dear Laurens, the letter which you wrote me in——last. Your wishes in one respect are gratified. This State has pretty unanimously elected me to Congress. My time of service commences in November. It is not probable it will result in what you mention. I hope it is too late. We have great reason to

flatter ourselves. Peace on our own terms is upon the carpet. The making it is in good hands. It is said your father is exchanged for Cornwallis, and gone to Paris to meet the other commissioners, and that Granville, on the part of England, has made a second trip there; in the last instance vested with plenipotentiary powers.

I fear there may be obstacles, but I hope they may be surmounted.

Peace made, my dear friend, a new scene opens. The object then will be to make our independence a blessing. To do this we must secure our Union on solid foundations—a herculean task—and to effect which mountains of prejudice must be levelled! It requires all the virtue and all the abilities of the country. Quit your sword, my friend; put on the toga. Come to Congress. We know each other's sentiments; our views are the same. We have fought side by side to make America free; let us hand in hand struggle to make her happy. Remember me to General Greene with all the warmth of a sincere attachment.

Yours for ever,

A. H.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was Hamilton's last letter to Laurens, who doubtless was killed before it reached him. — ED.

## TO MEADE

ALBANY, August 27th, 1782.

I thank you, my dear Meade, for your letter of the first of this month, which you will perceive has travelled much faster than has been usual with our letters. Our correspondence hitherto, has been unfortunate, nor in fact can either of us compliment himself on his punctuality; but you were right in concluding, that however indolence or accident may interrupt our intercourse, nothing will interrupt our friendship. Mine for you is built on the solid basis of a full conviction that you deserve it, and that it is reciprocal, and it is the more firmly fixed because you have few competitors. Experience is a continued comment on the worthlessness of the human race, and the few exceptions we find have the greater right to be valued in proportion as they are rare. I know few men estimable, fewer amiable, and when I meet with one of the last description it is not in my power to withhold my affection.

You reproach me with not having said enough about our little stranger. When I wrote last, I

was not sufficiently acquainted with him to give you his character. I may now assure you that your daughter, when she sees him, will not consult you about the choice, or will only do so in respect to the rules of decorum. He is truly a very fine young gentleman, the most agreeable in his conversation and manners of any I ever knew, nor less remarkable for his intelligence and sweetness of temper. You are not to imagine, by my beginning with his mental qualifications, that he is defective in personal. It is agreed, on all hands, that he is handsome; his features are good, his eye is not only sprightly and expressive, but it is full of benignity. His attitude, in sitting, is, by connoisseurs, esteemed graceful, and he has a method of waving his hand that announces the future orator. He stands, however, rather awkwardly, and as his legs have not all the delicate slimness of his father's, it is feared he may never excel as much in dancing, which is probably the only accomplishment in which he will not be a model. If he has any fault in manners, he laughs too much. He has now passed his seventh month.

I am glad to find your prospect of being settled approaches. I am sure you will realize all

the happiness you promise yourself with your amiable partner. I wish fortune had not cast our lots at such a distance. Mrs. Meade, you, Betsey, and myself, would make a most affectionate and most happy *partie quarré*.

As to myself I shall sit down in New York, when it opens, and the period, we are told, approaches. No man looks forward to a peace with more pleasure than I do, though no man would sacrifice less to it than myself, if I were not convinced the people sigh for peace. I have been studying the law for some months, and have lately been licensed as an attorney. I wish to prepare myself by October for examination as a counsellor, but some public avocations may possibly prevent me.

I had almost forgotten to tell you that I have been pretty unanimously elected by the legislature of this state, a member of congress, to begin to serve in November. I do not hope to reform the state, although I shall endeavour to do all the good I can.

Suffer Betsey and me to present our love to Mrs. Meade. She has a sisterly affection for you.

My respects, if you choose, to Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh. God bless you.

A. HAMILTON.

## TO GENERAL GREENE

ALBANY, October 12, 1782.

*Dear General,*— It is an age since I have either written to you or received a line from you; yet I persuade myself you have not been the less convinced of my affectionate attachment, and warm participation in all those events which have given you that place in your country's esteem and approbation which I have known you to deserve, while your enemies and rivals were most active in sully-  
ing your reputation.

You will perhaps learn, before this reaches you, that I have been appointed a member of Congress. I expect to go to Philadelphia in the ensuing month, where I shall be happy to correspond with you with all our ancient confidence; and I shall entreat you not to confine your observations to military subjects, but to take in the whole scope of national concerns. I am sure your ideas will be useful to me and to the public.

I feel the deepest affliction at the news we have just received of the loss of our dear and estimable friend Laurens. His career of virtue is at an end.

How strangely are human affairs conducted, that so many excellent qualities could not insure a more happy fate! The world will feel the loss of a man who has left few like him behind, and America of a citizen whose heart realized that patriotism of which others only talk. I shall feel the loss of a friend I most truly and tenderly loved, and one of a very small number.

I take the liberty to enclose a letter to Mr. Kane, executor to the estate of Mr. Lavine, a half-brother of mine, who died some time since in South Carolina.

I am, dear sir, truly your friend and servant,

A. HAMILTON.

<sup>1</sup>The last and most important paragraph of this letter is but indicated by stars in the "Works of Alexander Hamilton," which contains such a bulk of correspondence that more than one paragraph, believed unimportant by J. C. Hamilton, was dropped. But the letter may be found in its entirety in the second volume of the "Life," by his son, page 7. — ED.



## To LAFAYETTE

ALBANY, November 3, 1782.

Since we parted, my dear Marquis, at York-town, I have received three letters from you; one written on your way to Boston, two from France. I acknowledge that I have written to you only once; but the reason has been, that I have been taught daily to expect your return. This I should not have done from my own calculations; for I saw no prospect but of an inactive campaign; and you had much better be intriguing for your hobbyhorse at Paris, than loitering away your time here. Yet they seem to be convinced, at head quarters, that you were certainly coming out; and by your letters it appears to have been your own expectation. I imagine you have relinquished it by this time.

I have been employed for the last ten months in rocking the cradle and studying the art of *fleeing* my neighbours. I am now a grave counsellor-at-law, and shall soon be a grave member of Congress. The Legislature, at their last session, took it into their heads to name me, pretty unanimously, one of their delegates.

I am going to throw away a few more months in public life, and then retire a simple citizen and good *paterfamilias*. I set out for Philadelphia in a few days. You see the disposition I am in. You are condemned to run the race of ambition all your life. I am already tired of the career, and dare to leave it.

But you would not give a pin for my letter unless politics and war made a part of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Is there anything you wish on this side of the water? You know the warmth and sincerity of my attachment. Command me.

I have not been so happy as to see M. De Segur. The title of your friend would have been a title to everything in my power to manifest.

Yours *pour la vie*,

A. HAMILTON.

P.S. I wrote a long letter to the Viscount de Noailles, whom I also love. Has he received it? Is the worthy Gouvion well? Has he succeeded? How is it with our friend Gimat? How is it with General du Portail?

Poor Laurens! He has fallen a sacrifice to his ardour in a trifling skirmish in South Carolina.

You know how truly I loved him, and will judge how much I regret him.

I will write you again soon after my arrival at Philadelphia.

A. H.

TO JAMES HAMILTON, JR.

NEW-YORK, June 23, 1783.

*My dear Brother*, — I have received your letter of the 31st of May last, which, and one other, are the only letters I have received from you in many years. I am a little surprised you did not receive one which I wrote to you about six months ago. The situation you describe yourself to be in gives me much pain, and nothing will make me happier than, as far as may be in my power, to contribute to your relief.

I will cheerfully pay your draft upon me for fifty pounds sterling, whenever it shall appear. I wish it was in my power to desire you to enlarge the sum; but though my future prospects are of the most flattering kind, my present engagements would render it inconvenient for me to advance you a larger sum.

My affection for you, however, will not permit

me to be inattentive to your welfare, and I hope time will prove to you that I feel all the sentiments of a brother. Let me only request you to exert your industry for a year or two more where you are, and at the end of that time I promise myself to be able to invite you to a more comfortable settlement in this country. Allow me only to give you one caution, which is, to avoid, if possible, getting into debt. Are you married or single? If the latter, it is my wish, for many reasons, that you may continue in that state.

But what has become of our dear father? It is an age since I have heard from him, though I have written him several letters. Perhaps, alas! he is no more, and I shall not have the pleasing opportunity of contributing to render the close of his life more happy than the progress of it. My heart bleeds at the recollection of his misfortunes and embarrassments. Sometimes I flatter myself his brothers have extended their support to him, and that now he is enjoying tranquillity and ease; at other times I fear he is suffering in indigence. I entreat you, if you can, to relieve me from my doubts, and let me know how or where he is, if alive; if dead, how and where he died. Should

he be alive inform him of my inquiries, beg him to write to me, and tell him how ready I shall be to devote myself and all I have to his accommodation and happiness.

I do not advise you coming to this country at present, for the war has also put things out of order here, and people in your business find a subsistence difficult enough. My object will be, by and by, to get you settled on a farm.

Believe me, always your affectionate friend and brother,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

TO MRS. HAMILTON

PHILADELPHIA, July 22, 1783.

I wrote you, my beloved Eliza, by the last post, which I hope will not meet with the same fate that many others of my letters must have met with. I count upon setting out to see you in four days; but I have been so frequently disappointed by unforeseen events, that I shall not be without apprehensions of being detained, till I have begun my journey. The members of Congress are very pressing with me not to go away at this time, as the House is thin, and as the definitive treaty is momentarily expected.

Tell your father that Mr. Rivington, in a letter to the South Carolina delegates, has given information, coming to him from Admiral Arbuthnot, that the Mercury frigate is arrived at New-York with the definitive treaty, and that the city was to be evacuated yesterday, by the treaty.

I am strongly urged to stay a few days for the ratification of the treaty; at all events, however, I will not be long absent.

I give you joy of the happy conclusion of this important work in which your country has been engaged. Now, in a very short time, I hope we shall be happily settled in New-York.

My love to your father. Kiss my boy a thousand times.

A. HAMILTON.

#### FROM LAFAYETTE

PARIS, April, 1785.

*My dear Hamilton,* — Although I have just now written to M'Henry, requesting him to impart my gazette to you, a very barren one indeed, I feel within myself a want to tell you, I love you tenderly. Your brother Church has sailed for America, since which I had a letter from his lady,

who is in very good health. By an old letter from our friend Greene, I have been delighted to find he consents to send his son to be educated with mine; the idea makes me very happy. I wish, dear Hamilton, you would honour me with the same mark of your friendship and confidence. As there is no fear of a war, I intend visiting the Prussian and Austrian troops. In one of your New-York Gazettes I find an association against the slavery of negroes, which seems to me worded in such a way as to give no offence to the moderate men of the southern States. As I have ever been partial to my brethren of colour, I wish, if you are one in the society, you would move, in your own name, for my being admitted on the list. My best respects wait on Mrs. Hamilton.

Adieu.

Your affectionate friend,

LA FAYETTE.

FROM WASHINGTON

MOUNT VERNON, October 18, 1787.

*Dear Sir,* — Your favour, without date, came to my hand by the last post. It is with unfeigned

concern I perceive that a political dispute has arisen between Gov. Clinton and yourself. For both of you I have the highest esteem and regard. But as you say it is insinuated by some of your political adversaries, and may obtain credit, "that you *palmed* yourself upon me and was *dismissed* from my family," and call upon me to do you justice by a recital of the facts ; I do, therefore, explicitly declare, that both charges are entirely unfounded. With respect to the first, I have no cause to believe that you took a single step to accomplish, or had the most distant idea of receiving an appointment in my family until you were invited thereto. And with respect to the second, that your quitting it was altogether the effect of your own choice.

When the situation of this country calls for unanimity and vigour, it is to be lamented that gentlemen of talent and character should disagree in their sentiments for promoting the public weal ; but unfortunately this ever has been, and more than probable ever will be, the case in the affairs of men.

Having scarcely been from home since my return from Philadelphia, I can give but little information with respect to the *general* reception of the new



constitution in *this* State. In Alexandria, however, and some of the adjacent counties, it has been embraced with an enthusiastic warmth of which I had no conception. I expect, notwithstanding, violent opposition will be given to it by *some* characters of weight and influence in the State.

Mrs. Washington unites with me in sending her best wishes for Mrs. Hamilton and yourself.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient and affectionate friend,

G. WASHINGTON.

TO WASHINGTON

October 30th, 1787.

I am much obliged to your Excellency for the explicit manner in which you contradict the insinuations mentioned in my last letter. The only use I shall make of your answer will be to put it into the hands of a few friends.

The constitution proposed has in this State warm friends, and warm enemies. The first impressions everywhere are in its favour; but the artillery of its opponents makes some impression. The event cannot yet be foreseen. The inclosed is the first

number of a series of papers to be written in its defence.

I send you, also, at the request of the Baron De Steuben, a printed pamphlet, containing the grounds of an application lately made to Congress. He tells me there is some reference to you, the object of which he does not seem clearly to understand ; but imagines it may be in your power to be of service to him.

There are public considerations that induce me to be somewhat anxious for his success. He is fortified with materials, which, in Europe, could not fail to establish the belief of the contract he alleges. The documents of service he possesses are of a nature to convey an exalted idea of them. The compensations he has received, though considerable, if compared with those which have been received by American officers, will, according to European ideas, be very scanty in application to a stranger who is acknowledged to have rendered essential services. Our reputation abroad is not at present too high. To dismiss an old soldier, empty and hungry, to seek the bounty of those on whom he has no claims, and to complain of unkind returns and violated engagements, will certainly

not tend to raise it. I confess, too, there is something in my feelings which would incline me in this case to go farther than might be strictly necessary, rather than drive a man, at the Baron's time of life, who has been a faithful servant, to extremities. And this is unavoidable if he does not succeed in his present attempt. What he asks would, all calculations made, terminate in this, an allowance of his five hundred and eighty guineas a year. He only wishes a recognition of the contract. He knows that until affairs mend no money can be produced. I do not know how far it may be in your power to do him any good; but I shall be mistaken if the considerations I have mentioned do not appear to your Excellency to have some weight.

I remain, with great respect and esteem,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

IV

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY



## TO LAFAYETTE

NEW YORK, October 6th, 1789.

*My dear Marquis,*—I have seen, with a mixture of pleasure and apprehension, the progress of the events which have lately taken place in your country. As a friend to mankind and to liberty, I rejoice in the efforts which you are making to establish it, while I fear much for the final success of the attempts, for the fate of those I esteem who are engaged in it, and for the danger, in case of success, of innovations greater than will consist with the real felicity of your nation. If your affairs still go well, when this reaches you, you will ask why this foreboding of evil, when all the appearances have been so much in your favour. I will tell you: I dread disagreements among those who are now united, (which will be likely to be improved by the adverse party,) about the nature of your constitution; I dread the vehement character of your people, whom I fear you may find it more easy to bring on than to keep

within proper bounds after you have put them in motion. I dread the interested refractoriness of your nobles, who cannot all be gratified, and who may be unwilling to submit to the requisite sacrifices. And I dread the reveries of your philosophic politicians, who appear in the moment to have great influence, and who, being mere speculatists, may aim at more refinement than suits either with human nature or the composition of your nation.

These, my dear Marquis, are my apprehensions. My wishes for your personal success, and that of the cause of liberty are incessant. You are combined with a great and good man; you will anticipate the name of Necker. I trust you and he will never cease to harmonize.

You will, I presume, have heard before this gets to hand, that I have been appointed to the head of the finances in this country. This event, I am sure will give you pleasure. In undertaking the task I hazard much, but I thought it an occasion that called upon me to hazard. I have no doubt that the reasonable expectation of the public may be satisfied, if I am properly supported by the Legislature, and in this respect, I stand at present on the most encouraging footing.

The debt due to France, will be among the first objects of my attention. Hitherto it has been from necessity neglected. The session of Congress is now over. It has been exhausted in the organization of the government, and in a few laws of immediate urgency respecting navigation and commercial imposts. The subject of the debt, foreign and domestic, has been referred to the next session, which will commence the first Monday in January with an instruction to me to prepare and report a plan comprehending an adequate provision for the support of the public credit. There were many good reasons for a temporary adjournment.

From this sketch you will perceive that I am not in a situation to address anything officially to your administration; but I venture to say to you, as my friend, that if the instalments of the principal of the debt could be suspended for a few years, it would be a valuable accommodation to the United States. In this suggestion, I contemplate a speedy payment of the *arrears* of *interest* now due, and effectual provision for the punctual payment of future interest as it arises. Could an arrangement of this sort meet the approbation of your government, it would be best on every ac-



count that the offer should come unsolicited as a fresh mark of good will.

I wrote you last by M. de Varville. I presume you received my letter. As it touched some delicate topics, I should be glad to know its fate.

Yours, with unalterable esteem and affection,

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

FROM GULIAN VERPLANCK

NEW-YORK, 29th December, 1791.

*Sir*, — A number of your fellow-citizens, desirous of expressing the sense they entertain of the important services you have rendered your country, have raised by subscription a sum of money to defray the expense of a portrait of you, to be executed by Mr. Trumbull, and placed in one of our public buildings.

We have therefore to request that you will be so condescending as to allow Mr. Trumbull to wait upon you for the above purpose, at such time as will suit your conveniency; and will also be pleased to permit the representation to exhibit such part of your political life as may be most agreeable to yourself.

We have the honour to be, with perfect sentiments of esteem and respect, your most humble servants,

|                        |   |            |
|------------------------|---|------------|
| GULIAN VERPLANCK,      | } | COMMITTEE. |
| ROGER ALDEN,           |   |            |
| BROCKHOLST LIVINGSTON, |   |            |
| J. WADDINGTON,         |   |            |
| CARLILE POLLOCK,       |   |            |

To DUER

PHILADELPHIA, March 14, 1792.

*My dear Duer*, — Your letter of the 11th got to hand this day. I am affected beyond measure at its contents, especially as it was too late to have any influence upon the event you were apprehensive of, Mr. Wolcott's instructions having gone off yesterday.

I trust, however, the alternative which they present to the attorney of the        and the discretion he will use in managing the affair, will enable you to avoid any pernicious *éclat*, if your affairs are otherwise retrievable.

Be this as it may, act with *fortitude* and *honour*. If you cannot reasonably hope for a favourable

extrication, do not plunge deeper. Have the courage to make a full stop. Take all the care you can in the first place of institutions of public utility, and in the next of all fair creditors.

God bless you and take care of you and your family. I have experienced all the bitterness of soul on your account which a warm attachment can inspire. I will not now pain you with any wise remarks, though if you recover the present stroke, I shall take great liberties with you. Assure yourself, in good and bad fortune, of my sincere friendship and affection.

Adieu,

A. H.

FROM WASHINGTON

(Marked Private)

MOUNT VERNON, 26 August, 1792.

*My dear Sir,* — . . . Differences in political opinions are as unavoidable, as, to a certain point, they may be necessary; but it is exceedingly to be regretted that subjects cannot be discussed with temper on the one hand, or decisions submitted to, without having the motives which led to them improperly implicated on the other; and

this regret borders on chagrin, when we find that men of abilities, zealous patriots, having the same *general* objects in view, and the same upright intentions to prosecute them, will not exercise more charity in deciding on the opinions and actions of one another. When matters get to such lengths, the natural inference is, that both sides have strained the cords beyond their bearing, and that the middle course would be found the best, until experience shall have decided on the right way, or (which is not to be expected, because it is denied to mortals) there shall be some infallible rule by which we could forejudge events.

Having premised these things, I would fain hope that liberal allowances will be made for the political opinions of each other; and instead of those wounding suspicions, and irritating charges, with which some of our gazettes are so strongly impregnated, and cannot fail, if persisted in, of pushing matters to extremity, and thereby to tear the machine asunder, that there might be mutual forbearances, and temporizing yieldings *on all sides*. Without these I do not see how the reins of government are to be managed, or how the Union of the States can be much longer preserved.

How unfortunate would it be if a fabric so goodly, erected under so many providential circumstances, and in its first stages having acquired such respectability, should, from diversity of sentiments, or internal obstructions to some of the acts of government (for I cannot prevail on myself to believe that these measures are as yet the deliberate acts of a determined party), be harrowing our vitals in such a manner as to have brought us to the verge of dissolution. Melancholy thought! But at the same time that it shows the consequences of diversified opinions, when pushed with too much tenacity, it exhibits evidence, also, of the necessity of accommodation, and of the propriety of adopting such healing measures as may restore harmony to the discordant members of the Union, and the governing powers of it.

I do not mean to apply this advice to any measures which are passed, or to any particular character. I have given it in the same *general terms* to other officers of the government.<sup>1</sup> My

<sup>1</sup> Washington had written a similar but sharper letter to Jefferson. Hamilton, fearing for the permanence of his institutions, had for the first time applied himself in print to the demolition of Jefferson; and Jefferson and Freneau, in the *National Gazette*, were hitting back with no inconsiderable venom.

earnest wish is that balsam may be poured into *all* the wounds, which have been given, to prevent them from gangrening, and from those fatal consequences which the community may sustain if withheld. The friends of the Union must wish this. Those who are not, but wish to see it rendered, will be disappointed, and all things, I hope will go well.

We have learnt, through the medium of Mr. Harrison to Dr. Craik, that you have some thoughts of taking a trip this way. I felt pleasure at hearing it, and hope it is unnecessary to add, that it would be considerably increased by seeing you under this roof; for you may be assured of the sincere and affectionate regard &c.

### TO WASHINGTON

PHILADELPHIA, 9 September, 1792.

*Sir*, — I have the pleasure of your private letter of the 26th of August. The feelings and views which are manifested in that letter are such as I expected would exist. And I most sincerely regret the causes of the uneasy sensations you experience. It is my most anxious wish, as far

as you may depend upon me, to smoothe the path of your administration, and to render it prosperous and happy. And, if any prospect shall open of healing or terminating the differences which exist, I shall most cheerfully embrace it; though I consider myself as the deeply injured party. The recommendation of such a spirit is worthy of the moderation and wisdom which dictated it. And if your endeavours should prove unsuccessful, I do not hesitate to say, that in my opinion the period is not remote when the public good will require SUBSTITUTES for the DIFFERING MEMBERS of your administration. The continuance of division there must destroy the energy of government, which will be little enough with the strictest union. On my part there will be a most cheerful acquiescence in such a result.

I trust, Sir, that the greatest frankness has always marked, and will always mark, every step of my conduct toward you. In this disposition I cannot conceal from you, that I have had some instrumentality of late in the retaliations, which have fallen upon certain characters, and that I find myself placed in a situation not to be able to recede *for the present*.

I considered myself as compelled to this conduct

by reasons public as well as personal, of the most cogent nature. I *know*, that I have been an object of uniform opposition from Mr. Jefferson from the moment of his coming to the city of New-York to enter upon his present office. I *know*, from the most authentic sources, that I have been the frequent subject of the most unkind whispers and insinuations from the same quarter. I have long seen a formed party in the legislature under his auspices, bent upon my subversion. I cannot doubt, from the evidence I possess, that the *National Gazette* was instituted by him for political purposes, and that one leading object of it has been to render me and all the measures connected with my department as odious as possible.

Nevertheless, I can truly say, that, except explanations to confidential friends, I never directly or indirectly retaliated till very lately. I can even assure you that I was instrumental in preventing a very severe and systematic attack upon Mr. Jefferson by an association of two or three individuals in consequence of the persecution which he brought upon the Vice President, by his indiscreet and light letter to the printer, transmitting *Paine's* pamphlet.



As long as I saw no danger to the government from the machinations which were going on, I resolved to be a silent sufferer of the injuries which were being done me. I determined to avoid giving occasion to anything, which could manifest to the world dissensions among the principal characters of the government; a thing which can never happen without weakening its hands, and in some degree throwing a stigma upon it.

But when I no longer doubted, that there was a formed party deliberately bent upon the subversion of measures, which in its consequences would subvert the government; when I saw that the undoing of the funding system in particular (which, whatever may be the original merits of that system, would prostrate the credit and the honour of the nation, and bring the government into contempt with that description of men, who are in every society the only firm supporters of government), was an avowed object of the party; and that all possible pains were taking to produce that effect by rendering it odious to the body of the people, I considered it as a duty to endeavour to resist the torrent, and as an effectual means to that end, to draw aside the veil from the principal

actors. To this strong impulse, to this decided conviction, I have yielded. And I think events will prove that I have judged rightly.

Nevertheless, I pledge my honour to you, Sir, that, if you shall hereafter form a plan to reunite the members of your administration upon some steady principle of coöperation, I will faithfully concur in executing it during my continuance in office. And I will not directly or indirectly say or do a thing, that shall endanger a feud.

I have had it very much at heart to make an excursion to Mount Vernon by way of the Federal City in the course of this month, and have been more than once on the point of asking your permission for it. But I now despair of being able to effect it. I am nevertheless equally obliged for your kind invitation.

With the most faithful and affectionate attachment,

I have the honour to remain, Sir, yours,

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

## JEFFERSON TO WASHINGTON

MONTICELLO, 9 September, 1792.

*Dear Sir,*— . . . I now take the liberty of proceeding to that part of your letter wherein you notice the internal dissensions, which have taken place within our government, and their disagreeable effect on its movements. That such dissensions have taken place is certain, and even among those who are nearest to you in the administration. To no one have they given deeper concern than myself, to no one equal mortification at being myself a part of them. Though I take to myself no more than my share of the general observations of your letter, yet I am so desirous that even you should know the whole truth, that I am glad to seize every occasion of developing to you whatever I do or think relative to the government, and shall therefore ask permission to be more lengthy now, than the occasion particularly calls for, or would otherwise perhaps justify.

When I embarked in the government, it was with a determination to intermeddle not at all in the legislature, and as little as possible with my

co-departments. The first and only instance of variance from the former part of my resolution, I was duped into by the Secretary of the Treasury, and made a tool for forwarding his schemes, not then sufficiently understood by me; and of all the errors of my political life, this has occasioned me the deepest regret. It has ever been my purpose to explain this to you, when from being actors on the scene we shall have become uninterested spectators only. The second part of my resolution has been religiously observed with the war department; and, as to that of the treasury, has never been farther swerved from than by the mere enunciation of my sentiments in conversation, and chiefly among those, who, expressing the same sentiments, drew mine from me.

If it has been supposed that I have ever intrigued among the members of the legislature to defeat the plans of the Secretary of the Treasury, it is contrary to all truth. As I never had the desire to influence the members, so neither had I any other means than my friendships, which I valued too highly to risk by usurpations on their freedom of judgment and the conscientious pursuit of their own sense of duty. That I have utterly,

in my private conversations, disapproved of the system of the Secretary of the Treasury, I acknowledge and avow; and this was not merely a speculative difference. His system flowed from principles adverse to liberty, and was calculated to undermine and demolish the republic, by creating an influence of his department over members of the legislature. I saw this influence actually produced, and its first fruits to be the establishment of the great outlines of his project by the votes of the very persons, who, having swallowed his bait, were laying themselves out to profit by his plans; and that, had these persons withdrawn, as those interested in a question ever should, the vote of the disinterested majority was clearly the reverse of what they made it. These were no longer the votes then of the representatives of the people; and it was impossible to consider their decisions which had nothing in view but to enrich themselves, as the measures of the fair majority, which ought always to be respected.

If what was actually doing begat uneasiness in those who wished for virtuous government, what was further proposed was not less threatening to the friends of the constitution. For, in a report

on the subject of manufactures (still to be acted upon), it was expressly assumed, that the general government has a right to exercise all powers, which may be for the *general welfare*, that is to say, all the legitimate powers of government; since no government has a legitimate right to do what is not for the welfare of the governed. There was indeed a sham limitation of the universality of this power *to cases where money is to be employed*. But about what is it that money cannot be employed? Thus the object of these plans taken together is to draw all the powers of government into the hands of the general legislature, to establish means for corrupting a sufficient corps in that legislature to divide the honest votes, and preponderate by their own the scale which suited, and to have that corps under the command of the Secretary of the Treasury for the purpose of subverting, step by step, the principles of the constitution, which he has so often declared to be a thing of nothing, which must be changed.

Such views might have justified something more than mere expressions of dissent, beyond which, nevertheless, I never went. Has abstinence from the department committed to me been equally

observed by him? To say nothing of other interferences equally known, in the case of the two nations with which we have the most intimate connexions, France and England, my system was to give some satisfactory distinctions to the former, of little cost to us, in return for the solid advantages yielded us by them; and to have met the English with some restrictions, which might induce them to abate their severities against our commerce. I have always supposed this coincided with your sentiments; yet the Secretary of the Treasury, by his cabals with members of the legislature, and by high-toned declamation on other occasions, has forced down his own system, which was exactly the reverse. He undertook, of his own authority, the conferences with the ministers of these two nations, and was on every consultation, provided with some report of a conversation with the one or the other of them, adapted to his views.

These views, thus made to prevail, their execution of course fell to me; and I can safely appeal to you, who have seen all my letters and proceedings, whether I have not carried them into execution as sincerely as if they had been my own, though I ever considered them as inconsistent

with the honour and interest of our country. That they have been inconsistent with our interest is but too fatally proved by the stab to our navigation given by the French. So that if the question be, By whose fault is it that Colonel Hamilton and myself have not drawn together? the answer will depend on that to two other questions. Whose principles of administration best justify, by their purity, conscientious adherence? And which of us has, notwithstanding, stepped farthest into the control of the department of the other?

To the justification of opinions, expressed in the way of conversation, against the views of Colonel Hamilton, I beg leave to add some notice of his late charges against me in *Fenno's Gazette*; for neither the style, matter, nor venom of the pieces alluded to can leave a doubt of their author. Spelling my name and character at full length to the public, while he conceals his own under the signature of "An American," he charges me first, with having written letters from Europe to my friends to oppose the present constitution while depending; secondly with a desire of not paying the public debt; thirdly with setting up a paper to decry and slander the government.



The first charge is most false. No man in the United States, I suppose, approved of every title in the constitution; no one, I believe, approved more of it than I did; and more of it was certainly disapproved by my accuser than by me, and of its parts most vitally republican. Of this the few letters I wrote on the subject (not half a dozen, I believe) will be a proof; and for my own satisfaction and justification, I must tax you with the reading of them when I return to where they are. You will there see, that my objection to the constitution was, that it wanted a bill of rights, securing freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom from standing armies, trial by jury, and a constant *habeas corpus* act. Colonel Hamilton's was that he wanted a King and a House of Lords.<sup>1</sup> The sense of America has approved my objection, and added the bill of rights, not the King and Lords. I also thought a longer term of service, insusceptible of renewal, would have made a President more independent. My country has thought otherwise, and I have acquiesced implicitly. He

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful if Jefferson persuaded even himself of the truth of this nonsensical charge, of which there has never been a suggestion of proof.

wished the general government should have power to make laws binding the States in all cases whatsoever. Our country has thought otherwise. Has he acquiesced? Notwithstanding my wish for a bill of rights, my letters strongly urged the adoption of the constitution, by nine states at least, to secure the good it contained. I at first thought, that the best method of securing the bill of rights would be for four states to hold off till such a bill should be agreed to. But the moment I saw Mr. Hancock's proposition to pass the constitution as it stood, and give perpetual instructions to the representatives of every State to insist upon a bill of rights, I acknowledged the superiority of his plan, and advocated universal adoption.

The second charge is equally untrue. My whole correspondence while in France, and in every word, letter, and act on the subject since my return, prove, that no man is more ardently intent to see the public debt soon and sacredly paid off than I am. This exactly marks the difference between Colonel Hamilton's views and mine, that I would wish the debt paid to-morrow; he wishes it never to be paid, but always to be a thing wherewith to corrupt and manage the legislature.

Thirdly, I have never inquired what number of sons, relations, and friends of senators, representatives, printers, or other useful partisans Colonel Hamilton has provided for among the hundred clerks of his department, the thousand excisemen, custom-house officers, loan-of-officers, &c., &c., &c., appointed by him, or at his nod, and spread over the Union; nor could ever have imagined, that the man, who has the shuffling of millions backwards and forwards from paper into money, and money into paper, from Europe to America, and America to Europe, the dealing out of Treasury secrets among his friends in what time and measure he pleases, and who never slips an occasion of making friends with his means; that such a one, I say, would have brought forward a charge against me for having appointed the poet Freneau translating clerk to my office with a salary of two hundred and fifty dollars a year.

The fact stands thus. While the government was at New-York, I was applied to on behalf of Freneau to know if there was any place within my department to which he could have been appointed. I answered, there were but four clerkships, all of which I found full, and continued without any

change. When we removed to Philadelphia, Mr. Pintard, the translating clerk, did not choose to remove with us. His office then became vacant. I was again applied to there for Freneau, and had no hesitation to promise the clerkship for him. I cannot recollect whether it was the same time, or afterwards, that I was told he had a thought of setting up a newspaper there; but, whether then or afterwards, I considered it a circumstance of some value, as it might enable me to do what I had long wished to have done, that is, to have the material parts of the *Leyden Gazette* brought under your eye and that of the public, in order to possess yourself and them of a juster view of the affairs of Europe, than could be obtained from any other public source. This I had ineffectually attempted through the press of Mr. Fenno while in New-York, selecting and translating passages myself at first, then having it done by Mr. Pintard and the translating clerk. But they found their way too slowly into Mr. Fenno's papers. Mr. Bache essayed it for me in Philadelphia; but his, being a daily paper, did not circulate sufficiently in the other States. He even tried, at my request, the plan of a weekly paper of recapitulation from his daily paper, in

hopes that it might go into the other States ; but in this too we failed.

Freneau, as translating clerk and the printer of a periodical paper likely to circulate through the States (uniting in one person the parts of Pintard and Fenno), revived my hopes that the thing could at length be effected. On the establishment of his paper, therefore, I furnished him with the *Leyden Gazette* with an expression of my wish that he would always translate and publish the material intelligence they contained; and have continued to furnish them from time to time, as regularly as I received them. But as to any other direction or indication of my wish how his press should be conducted, what sort of intelligence he should give, what essays encourage, I can protest in the presence of Heaven, that I never did, by myself or any other, directly or indirectly, write, dictate, or procure, any one sentence or sentiment to be inserted *in his or any other gazette*, to which my name was not affixed, or that of my office. I surely need not except here a thing so foreign to the present subject as a little paragraph about our Algerine captives, which I put once into Fenno's paper.

Freneau's proposition to publish a paper having been about the time that the writings of PUBLICOLA and the DISCOURSES ON DAVILA had a good deal excited the public attention, I took it for granted, from Freneau's character, which had been marked as that of a good whig, that he would give free place to pieces written against the aristocratical and monarchical principles these papers had inculcated. This having been in my mind, it is likely enough I may have expressed it in conversation with others, though I do not recollect that I did. To Freneau I think I could not, because I had still seen him but once, and that was at a public table, at breakfast at Mrs. Ellsworth's, as I passed through New York the last year; and I can safely declare, that my expectations looked only to the chastisement of the aristocratical and monarchical writings, and not to any criticisms on the proceedings of the government.

Colonel Hamilton can see no motive for any appointment, but that of making a convenient partisan. But you, Sir, who have received from me recommendations of a Rittenhouse, Barlow, Paine, will believe, that talents and science are sufficient motives with me in appointments to which they are fitted; and that Freneau, as a man of genius, might

find a preference in my eye to be a translating clerk, and make good title moreover to the little aids I could give him as the editor of a gazette, by procuring subscriptions to his paper as I did, some time before it appeared, and as I have with pleasure done for the labours of other men of genius. I hold it to be one of the distinguishing excellencies of an elective over hereditary successions, that the talents, which nature has provided in sufficient proportions, should be selected by the society for the government of their affairs, rather than that this should be transmitted through the loins of knaves and fools, passing from the debauchees of the table to those of the bed.

Colonel Hamilton, alias "*Plain Facts*," says that Freneau's salary began before he resided in Philadelphia. I do not know what quibble he may have in reserve on the word "*residence*." He may mean to include under that idea the removal of his family; for I believe he removed himself, before his family did, to Philadelphia. But no act of mine gave commencement to his salary before he so far took up his abode in Philadelphia, as to be sufficiently in readiness for the duties of the office. As to the merits or demerits of his paper, they certainly concern

me not. He and Fenno are rivals for the public favour; the one courts them by flattery, the other by censure; and I believe it will be admitted that the one has been as servile as the other severe. But is not the dignity and even decency of government committed, when one of its principal ministers enlists himself as an anonymous writer or paragraphist for either the one or the other of them? No government ought to be without censors; and, where the press is free, no one ever will. If virtuous, it need not fear the fair operation of attack and defence. Nature has given to man no other means of sifting out the truth, either in religion, law, or politics. I think it as honourable to the government neither to know or notice its sycophants or censors, as it would be undignified and criminal to pamper the former and persecute the latter. So much for the past; a word now of the future.

When I came into this office, it was with a resolution to retire from it as soon as I could with decency. It pretty nearly appeared to me, that the proper moment would be the first of those epochs at which the constitution seems to have contemplated a periodical change or renewal of the public servants. In this I was confirmed by



your resolution respecting the same period, from which, however, I am happy in hoping you have departed. I look to that period with the longing of a wave-worn mariner, who has at length the land in view, and shall count the days and hours which still lie between me and it. In the meantime my main object will be to wind up the business of my office, avoiding as much as possible all new enterprises. With the affairs of the legislature, as I never did intermeddle, so I certainly shall not now begin. I am more desirous to predispose everything for the repose, to which I am withdrawing, than expose it to be disturbed by newspaper contests.

If these, however, cannot be avoided altogether, yet a regard for your quiet will be a sufficient motive for deferring till I become merely a private citizen, when the propriety or impropriety of what I may say or do may fall on myself alone. I may then, too, avoid the charge of misapplying that time, which, now belonging to those who employ me, should be wholly devoted to their service. If my own justification or the interests of the republic shall require it, I reserve to myself the right of then appealing to my country, subscribing my name to whatever I

write,<sup>1</sup> and using with freedom and truth the facts and names necessary to place the cause in its just form before that tribunal. To a thorough disregard of the honours and emoluments of office, I join as great a value for the esteem of my countrymen; and conscious of having merited it by an integrity, which cannot be reproached, and by an enthusiastic devotion to their rights and liberty, I will not suffer my retirement to be clouded by the slanders of a man, whose history, from the moment at which history can stoop to notice him, is a tissue of machinations against the liberty of the country, which has not only received and given him bread, but heaped its honours on his head.

Still, however, I repeat the hope, that it will not be necessary to make such an appeal. Though little known to the people of America, I believe, that, as far as I am known, it is not as an enemy to the republic, nor an intriguer against it, nor a

<sup>1</sup>This virtuous fling is pointless, for the anonymous political effusion was the custom of the day. Hamilton's style was unmistakable, and he never disguised it, nor denied the authorship of anything he wrote. On the contrary, he knew the additional weight such knowledge must give to anything he published; he merely followed the fashion of the day in using a fancy signature, usually classical. The *Federalist* papers were signed Publius, and even Jefferson would hardly have accused him of being ashamed of them!—ED.

waster of its revenue, nor prostitute of it to the purposes of corruption, as the *American* represents me; and I confide, that yourself are satisfied, that, as to dissensions in the newspapers, not a syllable of them has ever proceeded from me; and that no cabals or intrigues of mine have produced those in the legislature; and I hope I may promise, both to you and myself, that none will receive aliment from me during the short space I have to remain in office, which will find ample employment in closing the business of the department.

. . . In the mean time, and ever, with great and sincere affection and respect, dear Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.<sup>1</sup>

FROM JAMES HAMILTON

ST. VINCENT, June 12th, 1793.

*Dear Alexander*,— I wrote you a letter, inclosed in one to Mr. Donald, of Virginia, since which I have had no further accounts from you. My bad state of

<sup>1</sup> This is instructive reading in the light of the proven facts of history, and if Jefferson had chosen to rear a monument to his hypocrisy, he could hardly have done better. — ED.

health has prevented my going to sea at this time — being afflicted with a complication of disorders.

The war which has lately broken out between France and England makes it very dangerous going to sea at this time. However, we daily expect news of a peace, and when that takes place, provided it is not too late in the season, I will embark in the first vessel that sails for Philadelphia.

I have now settled all my business in this part of the world, with the assistance of my good friend, Mr. Donald, who has been of every service to me that lay in his power, in contributing to make my life easy at this advanced period of life. The bearer of this, Captain Sheriff, of the brig Dispatch, sails direct for Philadelphia, and has promised to deliver you this letter with his own hands; and as he returns to this island from Philadelphia, I beg you will drop me a few lines, letting me know how you and your family keep your health, as I am uneasy at not having heard from you for some time past. I beg my respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton and your children, and wishing you health and happiness, I remain, with esteem, dear Alexander,

Your very affectionate father,

JAMES HAMILTON.

To ———

August, 1793.

*Dear Sir,*— Poor *Duer* has now had a long and severe confinement, such as would be adequate punishment for no trifling crime. I am well aware of all the blame to which he is liable, and do not mean to be his apologist, though I believe he has been as much the dupe of his own imagination, as others have been the victims of his projects. But what then? He is a man—he is a man with whom we have both been in habits of friendly intimacy. He is a man, who, with a great deal of good zeal, has in critical times rendered valuable services to the country. He is a husband, who has a worthy and most amiable wife, perishing with chagrin at his situation;—your relation by blood, mine by marriage—he is a father, who has a number of fine children, destitute of the means of education and support, every way in need of his future exertions.

These are titles to sympathy, which I shall be mistaken if you do not feel. You are his creditor. Your example may influence others. He wants permission, through a letter of license, to breathe the

air for *five* years. Your signature to the enclosed draft of one will give me much pleasure.

Yours,

A. H.

TO MRS. NATHANAEL GREENE

PHILADELPHIA, September 3rd, 1793.

It is not an uncommon thing for you women to bring us poor men into scrapes. It seems you have brought me into one. You will wonder how. Hear the tale.

Shortly after I came into office, Wadsworth informed me that Baron Glaubeck was indebted to General Greene (to whom he had behaved in a very exceptionable manner), and that it was intended to endeavour to purchase of Glaubeck some pay which had just been granted to him by Congress, upon the plan of advancing to him a certain sum of money to satisfy his immediate necessities, and the residue that was due to him to be applied toward the indemnification of the General's estate, for what Glaubeck owed to it. I afterwards understood that the execution of this plan was committed to Flint or Duer, to one or both of them

—and that a purchase of the claim was in fact made — not indeed of Glaubeck, but of some person to whom he had parted with it for some trifling consideration — the object being throughout to benefit you by way of indemnification as above mentioned.

It likewise would appear from the Treasury records, that you have in fact received the whole benefit of the purchase. The conversations we had together when you were last in Philadelphia, assure me at least that the certificate for four-fifths of his claim accrued immediately to your use.

*Francis*, late a clerk in my department (partly from resentment at a disappointment he has met with at the Treasury, and partly, I believe, from its having been made worth his while by some political enemies of mine), endeavours to have it believed that this transaction was a speculation in which I was engaged, and in proof of it — a draft of a power of attorney, corrected by some interlineations in my handwriting, as he asserts.

I do not recollect this part of the business, though I think it is very possible that such a correction, in such a draft, may have been made by me.

For Duer and Flint, it seems, employed *Francis*

to make the purchase; and it is not unlikely that a draft of the power for the purpose may have been brought to me, to know from me whether it would answer the purpose of the Treasury as a competent instrument; and that I (believing the design to be such as I have represented, one not only wholly unexceptional but laudable one in which my friendship for you would naturally take part) may have taken up my pen and made such corrections as the draft might appear to stand in need of.

I give you this detail to show you how I may have been implicated.

What I wish of you is, that you will have the goodness to state in writing what you know of the affair; ascertaining that the purchase was for your benefit, and the cause of it; and that you will take the trouble to make affidavit to the statement, and forward to me.

As it is an affair of delicacy, I will thank you to request some gentleman of the law to give form and precision to your narrative.

You perceive that it is not in one way only that I am the object of unprincipled persecution; but I console myself with the lines of the poet—



He must needs be of optics keen,  
Who sees what is not to be seen.

And with this belief, that in spite of calumny,  
the friends I love and esteem will continue to love  
and esteem me,

Yours sincerely,

A. H.

#### IV

### THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE



FROM M'HENRY

NEW BALTIMORE, February 17, 1795.

*My dear Hamilton,*— The tempest weathered and landed on the same shore, I may now congratulate you on having established a system of credit, and having conducted the affairs of our country upon principles and reasoning which ought to insure its immortality, as it undoubtedly will your fame. Few public men have been so eminently fortunate as voluntarily to leave so high a station with so unsullied a character, and so well assured a reputation; and still fewer have so well deserved the gratitude of their country, and the eulogiums of history. Let this console you for past toils and pains, and reconcile you to humbler pleasures and a private life. What remains for you, having insured fame, but to insure felicity? Seek for it in the moderate pursuit of your profession, or, if public life still flatters, in that office most congenial to it; and which will

not withdraw you from those literary objects that require no violent waste of spirits, and those little plans that involve gentle exercise, and which you can drop or indulge in without injury to your family.

I shall expect to hear from you as soon as you get fairly settled. Not knowing whether I ought to address to you at Albany or New York, I have sent this to Mr. Murray, who will forward it, and who, I suppose, knows. Adieu.

Sincerely and affectionately,

JAMES M'HENRY.

### TO THEODORE SEDGWICK

BRISTOL, February 18th, 1795.

*My dear Sedgwick,* — Every moment's reflection increases my chagrin and disgust at the failure of the propositions concerning the unsubscribed debt. I am tortured by the idea that the country should be so completely and unnecessarily dishonoured. A day of reckoning must come. I pray you let the yeas and nays separate the *wheat* from the *chaff*. I may otherwise have to feel the distress of wounding a friend by a shaft

levelled at an enemy. The case is an extreme one. Managements are every way improper.

Yours affectionately,

A. HAMILTON.

### TO RUFUS KING

KINGSTON, February 21st, 1795.

*My dear King,*—The unnecessary, and capricious, and abominable assassination of the national honour, by the rejection of the propositions respecting the unsubscribed debt, in the House of Representatives, haunts me every step I take, and afflicts me more than I can express. To see the character of the country and the government so sported with—exposed to so indelible a blot—puts my heart to the torture. Am I, then, more of an American than those who drew their first breath on American ground? Or what is it that thus torments me, at a circumstance so calmly viewed by almost everybody else? Am I a fool—a romantic Quixote—or is there a constitutional defect in the American mind? Were it not for yourself and a few others, I could adopt the reveries of De Paux as substantial truths,

and could say with him that there is something in our climate which belittles every animal, human or brute.

I conjure you, my friend, make a vigorous stand for the honour of your country! Rouse all the energies of your mind, and measure swords in the Senate with the great slayer of public faith—the hackneyed veteran in the violation of public engagements. Prevent him, if possible, from triumphing a second time over the prostrate credit and injured interests of his country. Unmask his false and horrid hypothesis. Display the immense difference between an able statesman and the *man of subtleties*. Root out the distempered and noisome weed which is attempted to be planted in our political garden, to choke and wither, in its infancy, the fair plant of public credit.

I disclose to you, without reserve, the state of my mind. It is discontented and gloomy in the extreme. I consider the cause of good government as having been put to an issue, and the verdict rendered against it.

Introduce, I pray you, into the Senate, when the bill comes up, the clause which has been rejected, freed from embarrassment by the bills of credit,

bearing interest on the nominal value. Press its adoption in this, the most unexceptionable shape, and let the yeas and nays witness the result.

Among the other reasons for this is my wish that the true friends of public credit may be distinguished from its enemies. The question is too great a one not to undergo a thorough examination before the community. It would pain me not to be able to distinguish.

Adieu! God bless you.

P.S. Do me the favour to revise carefully the course of the bill respecting the unsubscribed debt, and let me know the particulars. I wish to be able to judge more particularly of the underplot I suspect.

FROM EDWARD STEVENS

PHILADELPHIA, May, 1796.

*My dear Friend,*—Almost ever since your departure I have been confined to my chamber, by a severe and obstinate catarrh. Though much better, at present my health is so much deranged that I dread encountering the warmth of the summer months in this city. I have, therefore, determined to take a voyage to sea, and I shall



visit St. Croix before my return. Mrs. Stevens has concluded to accompany me with our little ones. Our absence will be but short. If no unexpected event takes place, we shall certainly return by the month of September. I could not, however, leave America, without assuring you of our best wishes for the health and prosperity of yourself and family. May every blessing attend you. Mrs. S. unites with me in affectionate remembrance to Mrs. Hamilton.

I remain, with unfeigned attachment,

My dear Sir,

Your sincere friend,

EDWARD STEVENS.

FROM MR. GREENLEAF

NEW-YORK, July 27th, 1796.

*Dear Sir,*—The indispensable necessity of an immediate though short respite from business, united with motives of interest, and an unbounded attachment to reputation, induce me to make a proposition to you of a pretty extraordinary nature, but which after due reflection I flatter myself will be deemed not unworthy of your attention. My

engagements of every possible nature do not exceed twelve hundred thousand dollars, and my real and personal estate may with ease be liquidated and made to produce five millions of dollars; say, rather, a million of dollars annually for five consecutive years; but in consequence of some important and unexpected delinquencies on the part of persons whose engagements have become due to me, and must be paid from securities given, my own engagements become due more rapidly than my means (without having recourse to improper operations) can be made to answer. If you will now be induced to aid me with your name, responsibility, and talents, in the liquidation of my concerns and payment of my engagements, in such wise that no undue sacrifice of property shall result, and my name be borne through with the credit and propriety it deserves, the one-third part of the net residue of my whole estate, both real and personal, after payment of my engagements, shall become yours, provided you will consent that the mass shall remain undivided for ten years, and constitute the capital of a banking-house, to be established either in this city or at Philadelphia, in our joint names and under your sole guidance,

and the profits divided between us in equal portions.

I have reason to believe that, with the aid of your name and our joint responsibility, accompanied with the names of three other persons as trustees for deposited property, it will, by a reputable mode of financing I shall communicate, be practicable for me to obtain the use of a million of dollars at legal interest for the average term of five years, and with this sum I should calculate on being able to pay off all my engagements with due credit and advantage, as considerable amounts are due at distant periods, and may be purchased in at a considerable discount.

If these outlines so far meet your approbation as to induce you to wish my entering into a particular detail, it shall be done at such time as will best suit your leisure and convenience.

TO GREENLEAF

NEW-YORK, July 30th, 1796.

*Dear Sir,*—I have carefully reflected upon the subject of the 27th instant.

Though the data which it presents authorize

an expectation of large pecuniary advantage, and though I discern nothing in the affair which an individual differently circumstanced might not with propriety enter into; yet, in my peculiar situation, viewed in all its public as well as personal relations, I think myself bound to decline the overture.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT

August 3rd, 1796.

*Dear Sir,*— I have received your letter of the first. I deplore the picture it gives, and henceforth wish to forget there is a Bank or a Treasury in the United States, though I shall not forget my regard to individuals.

I do not see one argument in any possible shape of the thing, for the sale of bank stock or against that of the other stock, which does not apply vice versa, and I shall consider it one of the most infatuated steps that ever was adopted.

God bless you,

A. HAMILTON.

## TO THEODORE SEDGWICK

February 26th, 1797.

*My dear Sir,*— The present inimitable course of our public affairs proves me to be a very bad politician, so that I am afraid to suggest any affair that may occur to me. Yet I will give over my timidity and communicate for your consideration a reverie which has struck me.

It is a fact that the resentment of the French government is very much levelled at the actual President. A change of the person (however undesirable in other respects) may give a change to the passion, and may also furnish a bridge to retreat over. This is a great advantage to a new President, and the most ought to be made of it. For it is much to our interest to preserve peace, if we can with honour, and if we cannot, it will be very important to prove that no endeavour to do it has been omitted.

Were I Mr. Adams, then, I believe I should begin my Presidency by naming an extraordinary commission to the French Republic, and I think it would consist of three persons: Mr. Madison,

Mr. Pinckney, and Mr. Cabot. I should pursue this course for several reasons; because I would have a man as influential with the French as Mr. Madison; yet I would not trust him alone, lest his Gallicism should work amiss,—because I would not wound Mr. Pinckney, so recently sent in the same spirit; thirdly, I think Cabot would mix very useful ingredients in the cup.

The commission should be changed to make explanations—to remonstrate, to ask indemnification, and they should be empowered to make a new treaty of commerce not inconsistent with our other treaties, and perhaps to abrogate or remodify the treaty of alliance.

That treaty can only be inconvenient to us in the future. The guarantee of our sovereignty and independence henceforth is nominal. The guarantee of the West India Islands of France, as we advance in strength, will be more and more real. In future, and in a truly defensive war, I think we shall be bound to comply efficaciously with our guarantee. Nor have I been able to see that it means less than obligation to take part in such a war with our whole force. I have no ideas of treaties which are not executed.

Hence, I want to get rid of that treaty by mutual consent, or to liquidate its meaning to a treaty of *definite* succor—in a clearly defensive war; so many men, so many ships, so much money, and to be furnished by one ally to the other. This of course must be so managed as to exclude unequivocally the present war in all its mutations.

Such objects are important enough for *three*. In executive matters, I am as little fond as most people of plurality; but I think it pedantry to admit no exceptions to any general rule, and I believe, under the present circumstances of the case, a commission would be advisable. I give my dream of it as it has occurred: you will do with it what you please.

Yours,

A. H.

To — HAMILTON<sup>1</sup>

ALBANY, STATE OF NEW-YORK, May the 2d, 1797.

*My dear Sir*,—Some days since I received with great pleasure your letter of the 10th of March. The mark it affords of your kind attention, and the

<sup>1</sup> In "The Works of Alexander Hamilton" this letter has a blank in place of the first name, as here given. But this correspondent can be none other than Alexander Hamilton, third son of Alexander Hamil-

particular account it gives me of so many relations in Scotland, are extremely gratifying to me. You no doubt have understood that my father's affairs at a very early day went to wreck; so as to have rendered his situation during the greatest part of his life ineligible. This state of things occasioned a separation between him and me, when I was very young, and threw me upon the bounty of my mother's relatives, some of whom were then

ton of Grange and Elizabeth, his wife, parents of James Hamilton. The two oldest sons, John and Robert, dying without issue, this Alexander succeeded to the estates. He had a number of children, among them a son Alexander, who also corresponded with Hamilton. Robert was doubtless another son, but dying undistinguished in the United States, was lost sight of by the genealogist.

In a letter to Robert Troup, dated July 25, 1795, in which Hamilton tells this close friend that he has made him executor of his will, and enumerates his obligations, &c., he makes the following remarks, regarding his father: —

“I hesitated whether I would not also secure a preference to the drafts of my father, but these, as far as I am concerned, being a voluntary engagement, I doubted the justice of the measure, and I have done nothing. I regret it lest they should return upon him and increase his distress. Though, as I am informed, a man of respectable connections in Scotland, he became, as a merchant, bankrupt at an early day in the West Indies and is now in indigence. I have pressed him to come to me, but his great age and infirmity have deterred him from the change of climate.” It was probably in the letter to which the one of May 2, 1797, was the answer, that Hamilton learned the first definite news of his Scotch relatives. — ED.



wealthy, though by vicissitudes to which human affairs are so liable, they have been since much reduced and broken up. Myself at about sixteen came to this country. Having always had a strong propensity to literary pursuits, by a course of steady and laborious exertion, I was able, by the age of nineteen, to qualify myself for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the College of New-York, and to lay the foundation for preparatory study for the future profession of the law.

The American Revolution supervened. My principles led me to take part in it; at nineteen I entered into the American army as Captain of Artillery. Shortly after I became, by invitation, aid-de-camp to General Washington, in which station I served till the commencement of that campaign which ended with the siege of York in Virginia, and the capture of Cornwallis's army. The campaign I made at the head of a corps of light infantry, with which I was present at the siege of York, and engaged in some interesting operations.

At the period of the peace of Great Britain, I found myself a member of Congress by appointment of the Legislature of this State.

After the peace, I settled in the city of New-

York, in the practice of the law; and was in a very lucrative course of practice, when the arrangement of our public affairs, by the feebleness of the general confederation, drew me again reluctantly into public life. I became a member of the Convention which framed the present Constitution of the United States; and having taken part in this measure, I conceived myself to be under an obligation to lend my aid towards putting the machine in some regular motion. Hence I did not hesitate to accept the offer of President Washington to undertake the office of Secretary of the Treasury.

In that office I met with many intrinsic difficulties, and many artificial ones proceeding from passions, not very worthy, common to human nature, and which act with peculiar force in republics. The object, however, was effected of establishing public credit, and introducing order in the finances.

Public office in this country has few attractions. The pecuniary emolument is so inconsiderable, as to amount to a sacrifice to any man who can employ his time to advantage in any liberal profession. The opportunity of doing good, from the jealousy of power and the spirit of faction, is too small in

any station, to warrant a long continuance of private sacrifices. The enterprises of party had so far succeeded, as materially to weaken the necessary influence and energy of the Executive authority, and so far diminish the power of doing good in that department, as greatly to take away the motives which a virtuous man might have for making sacrifices. The prospect was even bad for gratifying in future the love of fame, if that passion was to be the spring of action.

The union of these motives, with the reflections of prudence in relation to a growing family, determined me as soon as my plans had attained a certain maturity, to withdraw from office. This I did by a resignation about two years since, when I resumed the profession of the law in the city of New-York under every advantage I could desire.

It is a pleasant reflection to me, that since the commencement of my connection with General Washington to the present time, I have possessed a flattering share of his confidence and friendship.

Having given you a brief sketch of my political career, I proceed to some further family details.

In the year 1780 I married the second daughter of General Schuyler, a gentleman of one of the

best families of this country, of large fortune, and no less personal and political consequence. It is impossible to be happier than I am in a wife; and I have five children, four sons and a daughter, the eldest a son somewhat past fifteen, who all promise me as well as their years permit, and yield me much satisfaction. Though I have been too much in public life to be wealthy, my situation is extremely comfortable, and leaves me nothing to wish but a continuance of health. With this blessing, the profits of my profession and other prospects authorize an expectation of such addition to resources as will render the eve of life easy and agreeable, so far as may depend on this consideration.

It is now several months since I have heard from my father, who continued at the island of St. Vincent. My anxiety at this silence would be greater than it is, were it not for the considerable interruption and precariousness of intercourse which is produced by the war.

I have strongly pressed the old gentleman to come and reside with me, which would afford him every enjoyment of which his advanced age is capable; but he has declined it on the ground

that the advice of his physicians leads him to fear that the change of climate would be fatal to him. The next thing for me is, in proportion to my means, to endeavour to increase his comforts where he is.

It will give me the greatest pleasure to receive your son Robert at my house in New-York, and still more to be of use to him; to which end, my recommendation and interest will not be wanting, and I hope not unavailing. It is my intention to embrace the opening which your letter affords me to extend my intercourse with my relations in your country, which will be a new source of satisfaction to me.

#### FROM WASHINGTON<sup>1</sup>

MOUNT VERNON, August 21st, 1797.

*My dear Sir,* — Not for any intrinsic value the thing possesses, but as a token of my sincere re-

<sup>1</sup> This letter was written as soon as the scandal of the Reynolds pamphlet reached Mount Vernon. Washington knew that every line he wrote was more than likely eventually to find its way into print: he was far too canny to condole frankly with his favourite upon the misfortune of being found out. Nevertheless his sympathy and affection prompted consolement, and he administered it in his own fashion. — ED.

gard and friendship for you, and as a remembrance of me, I pray you to accept a wine cooler for four bottles, which Colonel Biddle is directed to forward from Philadelphia, (where with other articles it was left,) together with this letter to your address. It is one of four which I imported in the early part of my late administration of the government; two only of which were ever used.

I pray you to present my best wishes, in which Mrs. Washington joins me, to Mrs. Hamilton and the family; and that you would be persuaded, that with every sentiment of the highest regard,

I remain your sincere friend,

And affectionate humble servant,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

To WASHINGTON

NEW-YORK, August 28th, 1797.

*My dear Sir,*— The receipt two days since of the 21st inst. gave me sincere pleasure. The token of regard which it announces, is very precious to me, and will always be remembered as it ought to be.

Mrs. Hamilton has lately added another boy to our stock; she and the child are both well. She desires to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Washington and yourself.

We have nothing new here more than our papers contain; but we are anxiously looking forward to a further development of the negotiations in Europe, with an ardent desire for general accommodation. It is at the same time agreeable to observe, that the public mind is adopting, more and more, sentiments truly American, and free from foreign tincture.

I beg my best respects to Mrs. Washington, and that you will always be assured of the most respectful and affectionate attachments, &c.

#### TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

NEW-YORK, August 7th, 1798.

*Dear Sir,*—Capt. Robert Hamilton, a first cousin of mine, is desirous of employment in this country, in the line of his profession. He is regularly bred to the sea, which he has followed since he was fourteen years old, and has had the best opportunities of improvement—among others that of

voyages to the East Indies. He has also commanded a ship and has acted as supercargo. I venture to recommend him with confidence as well qualified, and every way worthy, adding to skill in his profession, the sentiments of a gentleman, good morals, intelligence, and prudence. I interest myself very much in his success, and shall esteem it as a personal favour to myself whatever may be done for his interest.

FROM PICKERING<sup>1</sup>

August 22, 1798.

*Dear Sir,*— In writing freely as I have done yesterday and to-day in the enclosed letter to you, disclosing what is contemplated respecting your military station,<sup>2</sup> far from being apprehensive of justly incurring blame, I consider myself as performing a hazardous duty; but I am not conscious that the risk of incurring the displeasure of any man ever deterred me from doing what I conceived to be my duty. My anxiety to see you fixed second in command has arisen from the opinion which for

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State.<sup>2</sup> Second in command in the threatened war with France.



twenty years I have entertained of your superior genius and talents combined with integrity. The integrity of your competitors, I trust, is also unimpeachable. General Pinckney's character I believe to be eminently pure, and were their other qualifications equal, my solicitude would cease. Nay, there would be an evident propriety in their preceding you.

My proceeding has not proceeded from any claims you have on my friendship; for though we were never, to my knowledge, for one moment at enmity, our acquaintance was never so intimate as in the proper strict sense of the word to make us friends. My respect, esteem, and attachment have been founded on the qualities of your head and heart, as above suggested; and all the return I expected was, the regard due simply to an honest man. Viewing me as entitled to this character, you will not, nor would any one who knew as well as you my frank downright disposition, ascribe to flattery the sentiments I have expressed of you in our correspondence. It was impossible to reason the subject without expressing them. Thus much I have thought proper to add in justification, and as an apology for the enclosed, and for any similar sentiments in former letters.

## FROM PICKERING

(PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL)

TRENTON, August 23rd, 1798.

*Dear Sir,*— Mr. M'Henry<sup>1</sup> has just handed to Mr. Wolcott<sup>2</sup> and me his letter to the President<sup>3</sup> on the subject of calling you and General Knox<sup>4</sup> into immediate service, together with General Knox's letter to him in answer to the one enclosing his commission. General Knox's letter claiming the first rank, I see has been transmitted to you; and I was glad to see you, in your answer to the Secretary at War, tenacious of the station to which the Commander-in-Chief, the President and Senate, and the public voice have placed you. I did not know till now, that General Washington had so explicitly written you respecting your taking rank of General Knox, *whom he loved*, although I had formed the same conclusion from his silence concerning him in his letter to me, which I now enclose, and which Mr. Wolcott, only, of my col-

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of War.    <sup>2</sup> Secretary of the Treasury.    <sup>3</sup> John Adams.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Knox, of the Revolution. One of Hamilton's biographers has confounded this character with Hugh Knox, but so far as one may judge by the evidence, they were not even related.

leagues has seen. The original letter from General Washington to you, M'Henry now informs me, was by him shown to the President; notwithstanding which you have seen where you would have been placed. M'Henry said also, that General Washington made your appointment to be the *sine qua non* of his accepting the chief command. The weight of these facts seems to have escaped the President's recollection, or he would not desire that General Knox should take rank of you. It is plain that General Knox has conversed with him, referred to the rule of the former war to determine the relative rank of officers of the same grade, appointed on the same day, and the President has thence concluded that Knox is "legally" entitled to the precedence. But, as I yesterday informed you, the change proposed to gratify General Knox and the President, is by the latter put on General Washington's "opinion and consent," and such consent, surely, can never be given after the General's letter to you, in which, as M'Henry says, he explicitly told you, that he passed by Knox whom he loved, to give you the priority of rank. Upon the principle mentioned by General Knox, *Hand* must clearly precede you, as well as Knox and Pinckney. Lee, I presume,

must follow you, as he was only a captain of horse, when you, as aid to the Commander-in-Chief, had the rank of lieutenant colonel. I see in your letter to M'Henry, you refer to the *public voice* in your favour—and justly, as I yesterday mentioned. Yet the President imagines that “the *five* New England States” would be offended at your preceding Knox. He is most egregiously mistaken; it was among New England members of Congress that, I heard you, and you only, mentioned as the Commander-in-Chief, until General Washington was nominated; and I dare to say, that if among the New England delegates a vote were taken, nine in ten, if not the whole, would place you before Knox.

### TO WASHINGTON

NEW-YORK, September 30th, 1798.

*My dear Sir*,—Your obliging favour of the 24th instant has duly come to hand. I see in it a new proof of sentiments towards me which are truly gratifying. But permit me to add my request to the suggestions of your own prudence, that no personal considerations for me may induce more on your part than on mature reflection you may think

due to public motives. It is extremely foreign to my wish to create to you the least embarrassment, especially in times like the present, when it is more than ever necessary that the interests of the whole should be paramountly consulted.

TO KING<sup>1</sup>

NEW YORK, October 2, 1798.

*My dear Sir,* — Mr. R. delivered me your letter of the 31st of July. The opinion in that and other of your letters concerning a very important point, has been acted upon by me from the very moment that it became unequivocal that we must have a decisive rupture with France. In some things my efforts succeeded, in others they were disappointed: — in others I have had promises of conformity to lay the foundation of future proceeding; the performance and effect of which promises are not certainly known to me.

The public mind in this country continues to progress in the right direction. That must influence favourably the present Congress at the ensuing session. The next will be in all appearance intrinsically better.

<sup>1</sup> Rufus King, minister to England.

Of the executive I need say little; you know its *excellent* dispositions, its general character, and the composition of its parts. You know also how widely different the business of government is from the speculation of it, and the energy of the imagination dealing in general propositions from that of *execution* in *detail*.

There are causes from which delay and feebleness are experienced. But difficulty will be surmounted, and I anticipate with you that this country will ere long assume an attitude correspondent with its great destinies — majestic, efficient, and operative of great things. A noble career lies before it.

Why does not Gouverneur Morris come home? His talents are wanted. Men like him do not superabound. Indeed I wish that you were here rather than where you are, though I think your position an important one at the present juncture. But we want to infuse more abilities into the management of our national affairs.

Governor Jay is well. He and all your friends continue to take a lively interest in all that concerns you.

Adieu. Yours affectionately.

FROM A. HAMILTON

EDINBURGH, 29th Oct. 1798.

*My dear Cousin,*— I received a few days ago a letter from my brother Robert, overflowing with the warmest sensibility of the many important obligations for which he is indebted to both you and Mrs. Hamilton. Since you take a pleasure in conferring happiness, it will no doubt afford you satisfaction to learn the joy which your friendly reception, and endeavour to effect my brother's appointment into the American Navy, has communicated to his family in this country. The result of your application for the first-lieutenancy of one of the new frigates was still uncertain when he wrote; but without anticipating the event, I may truly assure you that the endeavour has impressed the most indelible gratitude on our minds, and that we view with sensations of no common kind the excellent portrait which ornaments our chimney-piece. By the way, father has been informed by an American gentleman who visited Edinburgh lately, that it is a striking though not a flattering likeness of the original. In addition

to the pleasure I received from a fair prospect of a permanent provision for my brother, I was not a little pleased that it removed him from the mercantile line into one for which he is much better qualified. A perfect knowledge of seamanship, and the routine of the naval duty, he has acquired both from long and various experience, and from the natural bent of his disposition, which early pointed to the sea. To amass a fortune by traffic requires talents of a different kind. Without affecting to undervalue these talents, it may be granted that eminent success in the mercantile line frequently depends on artful schemes and devices, which certainly confer no claim to respect, however necessary to success; and with these poor Robert can boast but little acquaintance. In the navy I consider him as in his element. Courage, attention, and naval skill constitute the excellence of a sea officer; and of these qualities (unless my partiality deceive me) he is eminently possessed. With these impressions, you will conceive of what importance his admission into the American navy as first lieutenant appears to me. To a mind like yours the pleasure of doing good is, I am sensible, a sufficient impulse; yet as my brother resides



under your roof, I am willing to hope that the unaffected simplicity, candour, and urbanity of his manner will in time produce a still more cogent motive in personal friendship. I hope you will forgive my talking in this manner of my own brother, yet I must add (even at the risk of having Mr. Shandy's oddities imputed to myself) that excepting in the want of professional pedantry, Sterne's character of Uncle Toby seems to me more applicable to my brother than to any I have ever been acquainted with.

In reply to your account of my acquaintance, Mr. Thomas Law, I am almost tempted to exclaim in the words of a statesman, to whom a manuscript plan of the famous projector Law had been submitted for his consideration, Oh la! Oh la! I am seriously concerned, however, to learn the embarrassed state of his affairs; though what could induce a man of his fortune to embark in such extensive speculations is not easily imagined. Your letter affords us some hope, though but a distant one, of seeing some of our young cousins in this country; wherever they are they will be followed by our kindest wishes for their prosperity.

I do not pretend to transmit you information on political subjects, yet they occupy at present so considerable a portion of the thoughts and conversation of the world, that they are not easily avoided. I anticipate the pleasure of our late glorious victories must have communicated to the true friends of the present American Constitution. The destruction nearly total of the Toulon and Brest squadron, the former destined for Egypt, and the latter for Ireland, must have given the death-wound to the French navy. The rebellion, too, which lately appeared so formidable in Ireland, utterly extinguished, and only revived occasionally in predatory attacks on the lives and properties of individuals, will enable the ministry to open the parliament with unusual éclat. The party of opposition has lately fallen into considerable discredit from their conduct at the trial of O'Connor, for whose principles they vouched in the most unqualified manner. Yet, notwithstanding these high attestations, O'Connor proves to be a traitor, actually conspiring to introduce a foreign enemy into his native country, at the very time in which our patriots were so loud in his praises. If it be admitted that they were

unacquainted with O'Connor's insidious designs, the vehemence of the protestations must show how open they are to deception, and argues little in favour of their understandings. Whether Buonaparte has reached his ultimate destination, or intends to prosecute his expedition to India, must soon appear; as the change of monsoon, which happens in the month of September, will prevent his traversing the Indian Ocean—unless he has previously effected his passage. There are no authentic accounts of his having left Cairo. I beg to offer my best compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, and that you will ever believe me, my dear cousin,

Faithfully yours,

A. HAMILTON.

FROM PICKERING

PHILADELPHIA, February 20, 1799.

*Dear Sir*,—Since I wrote you on the 9th, Dr. Stevens has been appointed Consul-General of St. Domingo, and will probably embark before the close of next week. If you have written further to me in answer to my letter of the 9th, the letter has miscarried, for I have received nothing.

I must frame Dr. Stevens's instructions in a few days, and wish to inform him with ideas on the point I stated. This cannot be done *officially*, but he will know how to use it.

TO GENERAL PINCKNEY

PHILADELPHIA, Dec., 1799.

*Sir*, — The death of our beloved Commander-in-Chief was known to you before it was to me. I can be at no loss to anticipate what must have been your feelings. I need not tell you what have been mine. Perhaps no friend of his has more cause to lament on personal account than myself. The public misfortune is one which all the friends of our government will view in the same light. I will not dwell on the subject. My imagination is gloomy — my heart is sad.

Inclosed is an order relative to the occasion which speaks its own object.

With the sincerest esteem and most  
Affectionate regard, I remain, sir,  
Your very obedient servant.

## TO MRS. WASHINGTON

January 12, 1800.

I did not think it proper, madam, to intrude amidst the first effusions of your grief; but I can no longer restrain my sensibility from conveying to you an imperfect impression of my affectionate sympathy in the sorrows you experience. No one better than myself knows the greatness of your loss; or how much your excellent heart is formed to feel it in all its extent. Satisfied that you cannot receive consolation, I will attempt to offer none. Resignation to the will of heaven, which the practice of your life insures, can alone alleviate the sufferings of so heartrending an affliction.

There can be few who equally with me participate in the loss you deplore. In expressing this sentiment, I may, without impropriety, allude to the numerous and distinguished marks of confidence and friendship of which you have yourself been a witness, but I cannot say in how many ways the continuance of that confidence and friendship was necessary to me in future relations. Vain, however,

are regrets. From a calamity which is common to a mourning nation, who can expect to be exempt? Perhaps it is even a privilege to have a claim to a larger portion of it than others.

I will only add, madam, that I shall esteem it a real and a great happiness if any future occurrence shall enable me to give you proof of that respectful and cordial attachment with which

I have the honour to be,

Your obliged and very obedient servant,

A. H.

#### To BAYARD<sup>1</sup>

NEW-YORK, January 16, 1800.

I was glad to find, my dear sir, by your letter, that you had not yet determined to go, with the consent of the federal party, in support of Mr. Burr; and that you were resolved to hold yourself disengaged, till the moment of final decision. Your resolution to separate yourself in this instance from the federal party, if your conviction shall be strong of the unfitness of Mr. Burr, is certainly laudable. So much does it coincide with my ideas, that if the

<sup>1</sup> James Asheton Bayard, M.C., of Delaware.

party shall, by supporting Mr. Burr as President, adopt him for their official chief, I shall be obliged to consider myself as an *isolated* man. It will be impossible for me to reconcile with my motives of honour or policy, the continuing to be of a party which, according to my apprehension, will have degraded itself and the country.

I am sure, nevertheless, that the motives of many will be good, and I shall never cease to esteem the individuals, though I shall deplore a step which I fear experience will show to be a very fatal one. Among the letters which I receive, assigning the reasons pro and con, for preferring Burr to J., I observe no small exaggeration to the prejudice of the latter, and some things taken for granted as to the former, which are at least questionable. Perhaps, myself the first, at some expense of popularity, to unfold the true character of Jefferson, it is too late for me to become his apologist. Nor can I have any disposition to do it.

I admit that his politics are tainted with fanaticism; that he is too much in earnest in his democracy; that he has been a mischievous enemy to the principal measures of our past administration; that he is crafty and persevering in his objects; that he

is not scrupulous about the means of success, nor very mindful of truth, and that he is a contemptible hypocrite. But, it is not true, as is alleged, that he is an enemy to the power of the Executive, or that he is for confounding all the powers in the House of Representatives. It is a fact, which I have frequently mentioned, that, while we were in the administration together, he was generally for a large construction of the Executive authority, and not backward to act upon it when it coincided with his views. Let it be added, that in his theoretic ideas, he has considered as improper the participations of the Senate in the Executive authority. I have more than once made the reflection, that, viewing himself as the reversioner, he was solicitous to come into the possession of a good estate. Nor is it true, that Jefferson is zealot enough to do anything in pursuance of his principles which will contravene his popularity or his interest. He is as likely as any man I know, to temporize; to calculate what will be likely to promote his own reputation and advantage, and the probable result of such a temper is the preservation of systems, though originally opposed, which being once established, could not be overturned without danger to the person who did



it. To my mind, a true estimate of Mr. Jefferson's character warrants the expectation of a temporizing, rather than a violent system. That Jefferson has manifested a culpable predilection for France, is certainly true; but I think it a question whether it did not proceed quite as much from her *popularity* among us as from sentiment; and in proportion as that popularity is diminished, his zeal will cool. Add to this, that there is no fair reason to suppose him capable of being corrupted, which is a security that he will not go beyond certain limits. It is not at all improbable, that in the change of circumstances, Jefferson's Gallicism has considerably abated.

As to Burr, these things are admitted, and indeed cannot be denied, that he is man of *extreme* and *irregular* ambition; that he is *selfish* to a degree which excludes all social affections; and that he is decidedly profligate. But it is said, 1st, that he is *artful* and *dexterous* to accomplish his ends; 2d, that he holds no pernicious theories, but is a mere *matter of fact* man; 3d, that his very selfishness<sup>1</sup> is a guard against mischievous foreign predilections; 4th, that his *local*

<sup>1</sup> It is always dangerous to look at the vices of men for good.

*situation* has enabled him to appreciate the utility of our commercial and fiscal systems, and the same quality of selfishness will lead him to support and invigorate them; 5th, that he is now disliked by the Jacobins; that his elevation will be a mortal stab to them, breed an invincible hatred to him, and compel him to lean on the federalists; 6th, that Burr's ambition will be checked by his good sense, by the manifest impossibility of succeeding in any scheme of usurpation, and that, if attempted, there is nothing to fear from the attempt. These topics are in my judgment more plausible than solid. As to the first point the fact must be admitted; but those qualities are objections rather than recommendations, when they are under the direction of bad principles. As to the second point, too much is taken for granted. If Burr's conversation is to be credited, he is not very far from being a visionary. He has quoted to me *Connecticut* as an example of the success of the democratic theory, and as authority, seriously doubts whether it was not a good one. It is ascertained, in some instances, that he has talked perfect Godwinism. I have myself heard him speak with applause of the French system, as unshackling the

mind, and leaving it to its natural energies; and I have been present when he has contended against banking systems<sup>1</sup> with earnestness, and with the same arguments that Jefferson would use.

The truth is, that Burr is a man of a very subtle imagination, and a mind of this make is rarely free from ingenious whimsies. Yet I admit that he has no fixed theory, and that his peculiar notions will easily give way to his interest. But is it a recommendation to have no theory? Can that man be a systematic or able statesman who has none? I believe not. *No general principles* will hardly work better than erroneous ones.

As to the third point, it is certain that Burr, generally speaking, has been as warm a partisan of France as Jefferson; that he has, in some instances, shown himself to be so with passion. But if it was from calculation, who will say that his calculations will not continue him so? His selfishness,<sup>2</sup> so far from being an obstacle, may be a prompter. If corrupt, as well as selfish, he may

<sup>1</sup> Yet he has lately by a trick established a bank — a monster in its principles, but a very convenient instrument of profit and influence.

<sup>2</sup> Unprincipled selfishness is more apt to seek rapid gain in disorderly practices than slow advantages from orderly systems.

[The footnotes to this letter are Hamilton's. — ED.]

be a partisan for gain. If ambitious, as well as selfish, he may be a partisan for the sake of aid to his views. No man has trafficked more than he in the floating passions of the multitude. Hatred to Great Britain and attachment to France in the public mind, will naturally lead a man of his selfishness, attached to place and power, to favour France and oppose Great Britain. The Gallicism of many of our patriots is to be thus resolved, and in my opinion, it is morally certain that Burr will continue to be influenced by this calculation.

As to the fourth point, the instance I have cited with respect to banks, proves that the argument is not to be relied upon. If there was much in it, why does Chancellor Livingston maintain that we ought not to cultivate navigation, but ought to let foreigners be our carriers? France is of this opinion too; and Burr, for some reason or other, will be very apt to be of the opinion of France.

As to the fifth point, nothing can be more fallacious. It is demonstrated by recent facts<sup>1</sup> that Burr is *solicitous* to keep upon *anti-federal*

<sup>1</sup> He trusts to their *prejudices* and *hopes* for support.

ground to avoid compromising himself by any engagements with the federalists. With or without such engagements he will easily persuade his former friends, that he does not stand on that ground; and after their first resentment they will be glad to rally under him. In the meantime he will take care not to disoblige them; and he will always court those among them who are best fitted for tools. He will never choose to lean on good men, because he knows that they will never support his bad projects, but instead of this he will endeavour to disorganize both parties, and to form out of them a third, composed of men fitted by their characters to be conspirators and instruments of such projects.

That this will be his future conduct may be inferred by his past plan, and from the admitted quality of irregular ambition. Let it be remembered that Mr. Burr has never appeared solicitous for fame, and that great ambition, unchecked by principle, or the love of glory, is an unruly tyrant, which never can keep long in a course which good men will approve. As to the last point, the proposition is against the experience of all times. Ambition without principle never was long under

the guidance of good sense. Besides that, the force of Mr. Burr's understanding is much over-rated. He is far more cunning than wise, far more dexterous than able.

(Very confidential)—In my opinion he is inferior in real ability to Jefferson. There are also facts against the supposition. It is past all doubt, that he has blamed me for not having improved the situation I once was in to charge the government. That when answered that this could not have been done without guilt, he replied, "*Les grands ames se soucient peu des petits moraux;*" and when told the thing was never practicable, from the genius and situation of the country, he answered, "That depends on the estimate we form of the human passions, and of the means of influencing them." Does this prove that Mr. Burr would consider a scheme of usurpation visionary?

The truth is, with great apparent coldness he is the most sanguine man in the world. He thinks everything possible to adventure and perseverance; and though I believe he will fail, I think it almost certain he will attempt usurpation, and the attempt will involve great mischief. But

there is one point of view which seems to me decisive. If the anti-federalists, who prevailed in the election, are left to take their own man, they remain responsible, and the federalists remain *free, united*, and without *stain*, in a situation to resist, with effect, pernicious measures. If the federalists substitute Burr, they adopt him and become answerable for him. Whatever may be the theory of the case abroad and at *home*, (for so from the beginning will be taught,) Mr. Burr must become *in fact* the man of our party; and if he acts ill we must share in the blame and disgrace. By adopting him, we do all we can to reconcile the minds of the federalists to him, and we prepare them for the effectual operation of his arts. He will, doubtless, gain many of them; and the federalists will become a disorganized and contemptible party. Can there be any serious question between the policy of leaving the anti-federalists to be answerable for the elevation of an objectionable man, and that of adopting, ourselves, and becoming answerable for, a man, who on all hands is acknowledged to be a complete Catiline? 'Tis enough to state the question to indicate the answer, if reason, not passion, presides in the decision.

You may communicate this and my former letter to discreet and confidential friends.

Yours very truly,  
A. H.

TO MRS. HAMILTON

PORTSMOUTH, June 21, 1800.  
Saturday.

I am here, my beloved, and to-morrow shall leave it for Boston, where I had hoped to arrive on Monday evening. The next morning I intend to proceed for Providence and New Port where I shall take passage for New-York by water. If I am fortunate in the passage I may hope to embrace you in Eight days from this time.

Most tenderly yours,  
A. H.

FROM GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

WASHINGTON, January 5th, 1801.

*My dear Sir,*—I have received your favours of the 24th and 25th of last month. I am much obliged for both.

The convention with France will be ratified *sub modo*. Such, at least, is my opinion. I wish



first to strike out the 2d and 3d article; secondly to fix a limitation of time. The 2d article, by suspending the operation, admits the existence of former treaties. The restitution of our trophies stipulated by the third, may damp the spirit of our country. That nation, which will permit profit or convenience to stand in competition with honour, is on the steep descent to ruin. If, with the exception of those articles, and a limitation of time, the convention be mutually ratified, I shall think it no bad bargain. Will the French consul ratify it when so curtailed and limited? Perhaps, if his affairs are prosperous, he will not. Some gentlemen propose adding a clause, to declare that it shall not prejudice former treaties. This appears dangerous, because, if afterwards ratified without that clause, such ratification may be construed as an assent to the conclusion, which the declaration was intended to obviate.

On the election between Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr, there is much speculation. Some, indeed most, of our Eastern friends are warm in support of the latter, and their pride is so much up about the charge of influence that it is dangerous to quote an opinion. I trust they will change or be

disappointed, for they appear to be moved by passion only. I have, more at the request of others than from my own mere motion, suggested certain considerations not quite unworthy of attention; but it is dangerous to be impartial in politics. You, who are temperate in drinking, have never, perhaps, noticed the awkward situation of a man who continues sober after the company are drunk.

Adieu, my dear Hamilton. God bless you and send you many happy years.

#### TO LAFAYETTE

NEW-YORK, January 6th, 1801.

I have been made happy, my dear friend, by the receipt of your letter of the 12th August last. No explanation of your political principles was necessary to satisfy me of the perfect consistency and purity of your conduct. The interpretation may always be left to my attachment to you. Whatever difference of opinion may on any occasion exist between us, can never lessen my conviction of the goodness both of your head and heart. I expect from you a return of this sentiment as far as concerns the heart. It is needless

to detail to you my political tenets. I shall only say, that I hold, with Montesquieu, that a government must be fitted to a nation as much as a coat to an individual; and consequently, what may be good at Philadelphia, may be bad at Paris, and ridiculous at Petersburg.

I join with you in regretting the misunderstanding between our two countries. You will have seen by the President's speech, that a door is again opened for terminating them amicably; and you may be assured that we are sincere, and that it is in the power of France, by reparation to our merchants for past injury, and the stipulation of justice in future, to put an end to the controversy.

But I do not much like the idea of your being in any way implicated in the affair, lest you should be compromitted in the opinion of one or other of the parties.

It is my opinion, that it is best for you to stand aloof; neither have I abandoned the idea that it is most advisable for you to remain in Europe till the difference is adjusted. It would be very difficult here for you to steer a course which would not place you in a party, and remove you from the broad ground which you now occupy

in the hearts of all. It is a favourite point with me, that you shall find in the universal regard of this country all the consolations which the loss of your own (for so I consider it) may render requisite.

Believe me always,

Your very cordial and faithful friend,

A. H.

### TO KING

NEW-YORK, June 3, 1802.

*My dear Sir,*—I have long been very delinquent towards you as a correspondent, and am to thank you that you have not cast me off altogether as an irretrievable reprobate. But you know how to appreciate the causes, and you have made a construction equally just and indulgent.

In your last you ask my opinion about a matter delicate and important, both in a public and in a personal view. I shall give it with the frankness to which you have a right, and I may add that the impressions of your other friends, so far as they have fallen under my observation, do not differ from my own. While you were in the midst of a negotiation interesting to your country, it

was your duty to keep your post. You have now accomplished the object, and with the good fortune, not very common, of having the universal plaudit. This done, it seems to me most advisable that you return home. There is little probability that your continuance in your present station will be productive of much positive good. Nor are circumstances such as to give reason to apprehend that the substitute for you, whoever he may be, can do much harm. Your stay or return, therefore, as it regards our transatlantic concerns, is probably not material, while your presence at home may be useful in ways which it is not necessary to particularize. Besides, it is questionable whether you can long continue in the service of the present administration, consistently with what is due as well to your own character as to the common cause. I am far from thinking that a man is bound to quit a public office, merely because the administration of the government may have changed hands. But when those who have come into power are undisguised persecutors of the party to which he has been attached, and study with ostentation to heap upon it every indignity and injury—he ought not, in my opinion,

to permit himself to be made an exception, or to lend his talents to the support of such characters. If, in addition to this, it be true that the principles and plans of the men at the head of affairs tend to the degradation of the government, and to their own disgrace, it will hardly be possible to be in any way connected with them without sharing in the disrepute which they may be destined to experience.

I wish I had time to give you a comprehensive and particular map of our political situation; but more than a rude outline is beyond my leisure.

You have seen the course of the administration<sup>1</sup> hitherto, especially during the last session of Congress; and I am persuaded you will agree with me in opinion, that it could hardly have been more diligent in mischief. What, you will ask, has been and is likely to be the effect on the public mind?

Our friends are sanguine that a great change for the better has been wrought and is progressive. I suppose good has been done—that the federalists have been reunited and cemented; have been awakened, alarmed. Perhaps, too, there may be

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson's. — ED.

some sensible and moderate men of the opposite party who are beginning to doubt. But I as yet discover no satisfactory symptoms of a revolution of opinion in the mass — “*informe ingens cui lumen ademptum.*” Nor do I look with much expectation to any serious alteration until inconveniences are extensively felt, or till time has produced a disposition to coquet it with new lovers. Vibrations of power, you are aware, are of the genius of our government.

There is, however, a circumstance which may accelerate the fall of the present party. There is certainly a most serious schism between the chief and his heir-apparent;<sup>1</sup> a schism absolutely incurable, because founded in the hearts of both, in the rivalry of an insatiable ambition. The effects are already apparent, and are ripening into a more bitter animosity between the partisans of the two men, than ever existed between the federalists and the anti-federalists.

Unluckily we are not as neutral to this quarrel as we ought to be. You saw, however, how far our friends in Congress went in polluting themselves with the support of the second personage for the

<sup>1</sup> Burr. — Ed.

Presidency. The cabal did not terminate there. Several men of no inconsiderable importance among us, like the enterprising and adventurous character of this man, and hope to soar with him to power. Many more, through hatred to the chief, and through an impatience to recover the reins, are linking themselves to the new chief almost without perceiving it, and professing to have no other object than to make use of him; while he knows that he is making use of them. What this may end in, it is difficult to perceive.

Of one thing only I am sure, that in no event will I be directly or indirectly implicated in a responsibility for the elevation or support of either of two men who, in different senses, are in my eyes equally unworthy of the confidence of intelligent or honest men.

Truly, my dear sir, the prospects of our country are not brilliant. The mass is far from sound. At head quarters a most visionary theory presides. Depend upon it, this is the fact to a great extreme. No army, no navy, no *active* commerce; national defence, not by arms, but by embargoes, prohibitions of trade, &c.; as little government as possible within; these are the pernicious dreams, which, as



far and as fast as possible, will be attempted to be realized. Mr. Jefferson is distressed at the codfish having latterly emigrated to the southern coast, lest the people there should be tempted to catch them, and commerce, of which we have already too much, receive an accession. Be assured, this is no pleasantry, but a very sober anecdote.

Among federalists old terrors are not cured. They also continue to dream, although not quite so preposterously as their opponents. All will be very well (say they) when the power once gets back into federal hands. The people, convinced by experience of their error, will repose a permanent confidence in good men. Risum teneatis? Adieu.

Yours ever,

A. HAMILTON.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT

GRANGE, August 14, 1802.

*My dear Sir,* — When you were last in town I proposed to communicate to you the outline of a project, by which I think you may enter upon a career of business beneficial to yourself and your friends. My almost constant attendance at court

ever since you were here, has retarded the communication which I shall now make.

Let a commercial capital be found, to consist of 100,000 dollars, divided into shares of \$100 each. A subscriber to pay in cash *one-tenth* of his subscription, and for the residue 7 per centum per annum. It will then be his interest to pay up as soon as he can.

The subscribers to form a partnership, under the firm of Oliver Wolcott and Co.; Oliver Wolcott alone to have the signature of the firm, and the active management of the affairs of the company, with an allowance of \$1500 per annum out of the profits for the trouble of management, besides his share of profits as a partner.

Oliver Wolcott and two others of the partners to form a board of direction, to plan, &c.

Clerks and all incidental expenses to be paid out of the fund.

The objects of the company:

1. Agencies for purchase of lands, stocks, &c.
2. Factorage of cargoes, consigned on commission; purchases of goods on commission &c.; in brief, "the business of a commission merchant merely."

3. Purchases at auction, and sales of the articles purchased.
4. Loans of money on deposit of goods, with a right, if not redeemed in time, to sell on commission, perhaps.

Speculation in navigation and commerce to be excluded.

In a company thus formed under your management, I should be willing to become a partner for from five to ten thousand dollars, and I have no doubt that the capital will be readily formed of confidential and trustworthy characters, who would insure great credit to the house. I am also confident, that when it should be known in Europe that certain characters were of the company, it would attract a good portion of profitable employment.

I will enter into no farther detail. If the project impresses you favourably, come to New York, and we will give it form and finish, and prepare for the execution. Do not lightly reject it.

## To MORRIS

GRANGE, September 4th, 1802.

*My dear Sir,*— I fully intended to have dined with you to-day, but, going to town the last two days, and forgetting that I ought to observe a regimen, I have brought back, in some degree, the complaint which lately annoyed me, and which requires to be well watched. This must deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you.

I send schedules of the papers required of Tillier, all which have been put into my hands; the bills to remain till the close of the affair; the other documents to be delivered to your order.

I also send a draught of the trust deed. It endeavours to comply with your suggestion, as far as can be done without running foul of the danger desired to be avoided.

Your guests are invited to dine with us Thursday next. Will you make one?

## TO GENERAL C. C. PINCKNEY

GRANGE (New-York), December 29, 1802.

*My dear Sir,*— A garden, you know, is a very usual refuge of a disappointed politician. Accordingly I have purchased a few acres about nine miles from town, have built a house, and am cultivating a garden. The *melons* in your country are very fine. Will you have the goodness to send me some seed, both of the water and musk melons? My daughter adds another request, which is for three or four of your paroquets. She is very fond of birds. If there be anything in this quarter, the sending of which can give you pleasure, you have only to name them. As *farmers*, a new source of sympathy has arisen between us, and I am pleased with everything in which our likings and tastes can be approximated. Amidst the triumphant reign of democracy, do you retain sufficient interest in public affairs to feel any curiosity about what is going on? In my opinion, the follies and vices of the administration have as yet made no material impression to their disadvantage. On the contrary, I think the malady is rather

progressive than on the decline, in our northern quarter. The last *lullaby* message, instead of inspiring contempt, attracts praise. Mankind are for ever destined to be the dupes of bold or cunning imposture. But a difficult knot has been twisted by the incidents of the cession of Louisiana, and the interruption of the deposit of New Orleans. You have seen the soft turn given to this in the message. Yet we are told that the President, in conversation, is very stout. The great embarrassment must be how to carry on the war without taxes. The pretty scheme of substituting economy to taxation will not do here. And a war would be a terrible comment upon the abandonment of the internal revenue. Yet how is popularity to be preserved with the western partisans, if their interests are tamely sacrificed? Will the artifice be for the chief to hold a bold language, and the subalterns to act a feeble part? Time must explain. You know my general theory as to our western affairs. I have always held that the *unity of our empire*, and the best interests of our nation, require that we shall annex to the United States all the territory east of the Mississippi, New Orleans included. Of course I infer that,

on an emergency like the present, energy is wisdom.

Mrs. Hamilton joins me in affectionate compliments to Mrs. Pinckney.

#### FROM LAFAYETTE

PARIS, Germinal the 10th, 11th year.

*My dear Hamilton,* — I would like by this opportunity to write you a long letter, but have been lying on my back for two months past, and being three weeks to come doomed to the same situation, I must confine myself to a few lines written near my bed. The particulars of the accident and its cure, will be given to you by General Bernadotte, whom I must particularly introduce, and his lady, to Mrs. Hamilton and you. Politics I will not dwell upon. My sentiments are so well known to you that it were superfluous to say what I think of Senatus-Consulta at home, and settling colonies in North America; yet I hope this late affair may still be arranged to mutual satisfaction, and I am sure nobody could have better personal dispositions than my friend General Bernadotte, who, to those high and brilliant abilities which have so much

contributed to the triumph of the French arms, joins one of the most civic, candid, and generous hearts it is possible to meet with. I know he sets a great value by the approbation of the citizens of America, and is particularly desirous of your acquaintance, and properly sensible of its advantages. I have seen in the papers a letter from you relative to the transactions at our York Town redoubt, in which I have found my friend Hamilton's whole character; and the more pleased I have been to receive it, as the attack had been some time known to me, but on the proposal of some friends to write to you, I had answered you were on the spot, and would know better what was best for me to be done. Adieu, my dear friend; my best respects to Mrs. Hamilton. Remember me to our friends. I know you are most friendly interested in my private concerns, and have ever depended upon it.

Most affectionately I am your constant friend,  
LA FAYETTE.



## FROM GOVERNOR WALSTERSTORFF

ST. CROIX, April 20th, 1803.

*Dear General,*— When I received your favour of the 5th August, I certainly did not think I should postpone so long answering it, and returning you my thanks for this proof of your kind remembrance. I shall offer you no apology for it, because there is none that would be satisfactory to myself. I beg you only to be assured, dear General, that there is not a character in America for whom I feel a greater regard and respect than that of General Hamilton, whose talents will no doubt soon again be called into action to the honour and advantage of his country.

You would oblige me very much by sending our friend, Dr. Stevens, a copy of Camillus' letters, and of your later productions; the only copy of Camillus' letters which I had, I once lent to the late Count Bernstorff, who begged of me to let him keep it in his library *as a classical work*—these were his expressions.

Accept my sincerest wishes for your happiness and that of your family, and believe me to be,

with the greatest regard, and the sincerest attachment &c.

### TO TALLEYRAND

NEW YORK, March 25th, 1804.

*Sir*, — Presuming on the acquaintance, from which I derived much pleasure during your stay in this country, I am going to take a very great liberty. It concerns a near relation of mine, Mr. Alexander Hamilton, now a prisoner of war on parole at Paris.

His brother, from whom I have just received a letter, informs me that on a visit to the continent, as a traveller, he was overtaken by the war between France and Great Britain, and has been since that time in the situation which I have mentioned. He is a Scotch gentleman of education and literary acquirement, who, having amassed a pretty handsome fortune in the East Indies, had returned to his own country to devote himself to the pursuits of knowledge, and was induced to pass over to the continent to indulge his curiosity, with a particular eye to the very interesting monuments of the arts, of which Paris is now the depository.

I will ask nothing specific for him, because I know not what could with propriety be done, contenting myself with merely saying, that if your interposition can procure for him any facility, indulgence, or favour, it will confer a personal obligation on one who has the honour &c.

**V**

**THE DUEL**



FROM BURR

NEW-YORK, June 18th, 1804.

*Sir*, — I send for your perusal a letter signed Charles D. Cooper, which, though apparently published some time ago, has but recently come to my knowledge. Mr. Van Ness, who does me the favour to deliver this, will point out to you that clause of the letter to which I particularly call your attention.

You must perceive, sir, the necessity of a prompt, unqualified acknowledgment or denial of the use of any expression which would warrant the assertions of Dr. Cooper.

I have the honour to be your obedient servant,  
A. BURR.

TO BURR

June 20th, 1804.

*Sir*, — I have maturely reflected on the substance of your letter of the eighteenth inst., and the more I have reflected the more I have become

convinced that I could not, without manifest impropriety, make the avowal or disavowal which you seem to think necessary. The clause pointed out by Mr. Van Ness is in these terms: "I could detail to you a *still more despicable opinion* which Mr. Hamilton *has expressed* of Mr. Burr." To endeavour to discover the meaning of this declaration I was obliged to seek in the antecedent part of the letter for the opinion to which it referred as having been already disclosed. I found it in these words: "General Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared *in substance* that they looked upon Mr. Burr as a *dangerous man* and one *who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government*."

The language of Dr. Cooper plainly implies that *he* considered this opinion of you, which he attributes to me, as a despicable one; but he affirms that I have expressed some other, *more despicable*, without, however, mentioning to whom, when, or where. 'Tis evident that the phrase, "still more despicable," admits of infinite shades, from very light to very dark. How am I to judge of the degree intended? or how shall I annex any precise idea to language so indefinite?

Between gentlemen, despicable and *more despicable* are not worth the pains of distinction; when, therefore, you do not interrogate me as to the opinion which is specifically ascribed to me, I must conclude that you view it as within the limits to which the animadversions of political opponents upon each other may justifiably extend; and consequently as not warranting the idea of it which Dr. Cooper appears to entertain. If so, what precise inference could you draw, as a judge for your conduct, were I to acknowledge that I had expressed an opinion *still more despicable* than the one which is particularized? How could you be sure that even this opinion had exceeded the bounds which you yourself deem admissible between political opponents?

But I forbear further comment on the embarrassment to which the requisition you have made naturally leads. The occasion forbids a more ample illustration, though nothing could be more easy than to pursue it.

Repeating that I cannot reconcile it with propriety to make the acknowledgment or denial you desire, I will add that I deem it inadmissible, on principle, to consent to be interrogated as to



the justness of the inferences which may be drawn by others from whatever I may have said of a political opponent of fifteen years' competition. If there were no other objection to it, this is sufficient, that it would tend to expose my sincerity and delicacy to injurious imputations from every person who may at any time have conceived the import of my expressions differently from what I may then have intended or may afterwards recollect. I stand ready to avow or disavow promptly and explicitly any precise or definite opinion which I may be charged with having declared of any gentleman. More than this cannot fitly be expected from me; and especially, it cannot reasonably be expected that I shall enter into an explanation upon a basis so vague as that which you have adopted. I trust on more reflection you will see the matter in the same light with me. If not I can only regret the circumstance and must abide the consequences.

The publication of Dr. Cooper was never seen by me till after the receipt of your letter.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

A. HAMILTON.

## FROM BURR

NEW YORK, June 21, 1804.

*Sir*, — Your letter of the 20th inst. has been this day received. Having considered it attentively, I regret to find in it nothing of that sincerity and delicacy which you profess to value.

*Political opposition* can never absolve gentlemen from the necessity of a rigid adherence to the laws of honour and the rules of decorum. I neither claim such privilege nor indulge it in others. The common sense of mankind affixes to the epithet adopted by Dr. Cooper the idea of dishonour. It has been publicly applied to me under the sanction of your name. The question is not, whether he has understood the meaning of the word, or has used it according to syntax and with grammatical accuracy: but whether you have authorized this declaration, either directly or by uttering expressions derogatory to my honour.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One may imagine the grin with which Burr penned these high-flown sentiments, for visionary and sanguine as he was, there is no reason to believe that he had any delusions regarding his own honour. And he had never been under any delusions regarding Hamilton's opinion of him. Had he been sincere in seeking redress, from motives of outraged honour, or even for purely political reasons, he would have challenged Hamilton after his loss of the Presidency, four years before. — ED.

The time "when" is in your own knowledge, but no way material to me, as the calumny has now first been disclosed, so as to become the subject of my notice, and as the effect is present and palpable.

Your letter has furnished me with new reasons for requiring a definite reply.

I have the honour to be, sir, Your obedient

A. BURR.

### To BURR

NEW YORK, June 22, 1804.

*Sir*,—Your first letter, in a style too peremptory, made a demand, in my opinion, unprecedented and unwarrantable. My answer, pointing out the embarrassment, gave you an opportunity to take a less exceptionable course. You have not chosen to do it; but, by your last letter, received this day, containing expressions indecorous and improper, you have increased the difficulties intrinsically incident to the nature of your application.

If by a definite reply you mean the direct avowal or disavowal required in your first letter, I have no other answer to give, than that which has already

been given. If you mean anything different, admitting of greater latitude, it is requisite you should explain.

I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient

ALEX. HAMILTON.

### TO SEDGWICK

NEW YORK, July 10th, 1804.

*My dear Sir,* — I have received two letters from you since we last saw each other — that of the latest date being the twenty-fourth of May. I have had on hand for some time a long letter to you, explaining the course and tendency of our politics, and my intention as to my own future conduct. But my plan embraced so large a range, that, owing to much avocation, some indifferent health, and a growing distaste for politics, the letter is still considerably short of being finished. I write this now to satisfy you that want of regard for you has not been the cause of my silence.

I will express but one sentiment, which is, that DISMEMBERMENT of our EMPIRE will be a clear sacrifice of great positive advantages, without any counterbalancing good; administering no relief to

our real disease, which is DEMOCRACY; the poison of which, by a subdivision, will only be the more concentrated in each part, and consequently the more virulent. King is on his way to Boston, where you may chance to see him, and hear from himself his sentiments.

God bless you.

A. H.

## APPENDIX



Burial Register of St John's  
Episcopal Church, Christchurch,  
in the Island of St. Kitts.

— 1868 —

Agnes Sister Jan 24 in Church Year by D. Aged 38

Elizabeth Hinton Jan 28 in Church aged 12

Charlotte Richardson Feb 14 in Church aged 6 Months

Benjamin Parker Feb 25 in Church by D. Aged

William Richardson March 18 at Grand Pond aged 46

Michael Lewis Feb 26 at 107 State Street by D. Aged 32

Andrew Hinton Feb 27 in Church aged 58





FOUND IN THE ROYAL LIBRARY, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

"The Royal Danish-American Gazette," Vol. III., No. 234, Saturday, October 3d, 1772. Edited by THIBOÛ, Christianstadt, St. Croix.

The following letter was written the week after the Hurricane, by a Youth of this Island, to his Father; the copy of it fell by accident into the hands of a gentleman, who, being pleased with it himself, shewed it to others to whom it gave equal satisfaction, and who all agreed that it might not prove uninteresting to the Publick. The Author's modesty in long refusing to submit it to the Publick view, is the reason of its making its appearance so late as it now does.

ST. CROIX, Sept. 6, 1772.

*Honoured Sir*,—I take up my pen just to give you an imperfect account of the most dreadful hurricane that memory or any records whatever can trace, which happened here on the 31st ultimo at night.

It began about dusk, at North, and raged very violently till ten o'clock. Then ensued a sudden and unexpected interval, which lasted about an hour. Meanwhile the wind was shifting round to the South West point, from whence it returned with redoubled fury and continued so till near three o'clock in the morning. Good God! what horror

and destruction — it's impossible for me to describe — or you to form any idea of it. It seemed as if a total dissolution of nature was taking place. The roaring of the sea and wind — fiery meteors flying about in the air — the prodigious glare of almost perpetual lightning — the crash of the falling houses — and the ear-piercing shrieks of the distressed, were sufficient to strike astonishment into Angels. A great part of the buildings throughout the Island are levelled to the ground — almost all the rest very much shattered — several persons killed and numbers utterly ruined — whole families running about the streets unknowing where to find a place of shelter — the sick exposed to the keenness of water and air — without a bed to lie upon — or a dry covering to their bodies — our harbour is entirely bare. In a word, misery in all its most hideous shapes spread over the whole face of the country. — A strong smell of gunpowder added somewhat to the terrors of the night; and it was observed that the rain was surprisingly salt. Indeed, the water is so brackish and full of sulphur that there is hardly any drinking it.

My reflections and feelings on this frightful and melancholy occasion are set forth in following self-discourse.

—

Where now, Oh! vile worm, is all thy boasted fortitude and resolution? what is become of thy arrogance and self-sufficiency?—why dost thou tremble and stand aghast? how humble—how helpless—how contemptible you now appear. And for why? the jarring of the elements—the discord of clouds? Oh, impotent presumptuous fool! how darest thou offend that omnipotence, whose nod alone were sufficient to quell the destruction that hovers over thee, or crush thee into atoms? See thy wretched helpless state and learn to know thyself. Learn to know thy best support. Despise thyself and adore thy God. How sweet—how unutterably sweet were now the voice of an approving conscience;—then couldst thou say—hence ye idle alarms—why do I shrink? What have I to fear? A pleasing calm suspense! a short repose from calamity to end in eternal bliss?—let the earth rend, let the planets forsake their course—let the sun be extinguished, and the heavens burst asunder—yet what have I to dread? my staff can never be broken—in omnipotence I trust.

He who gave the winds to blow and the lightnings to rage—even him I have always loved and served—his precepts have I observed—his

commandments have I obeyed — and his perfections have I adored. — He will snatch me from ruin — he will exalt me to the fellowship of Angels and Seraphs, and to the fulness of never ending joys.

But alas! how different, how deplorable — how gloomy the prospect — death comes rushing on in triumph veiled in a mantle of ten-fold darkness. His unrelenting scythe, pointed and ready for the stroke. — On his right hand sits destruction, hurling the winds and belching forth flames; — calamity on his left threatening famine, disease, distress of all kinds. — And Oh! thou wretch, look still a little further; see the gulf of eternal mystery open — there mayest thou shortly plunge — the just reward of thy vileness. — Alas! whither canst thou fly? where hide thyself? thou canst not call upon thy God; — thy life has been a continual warfare with him.

Hark! ruin and confusion on every side. — 'Tis thy turn next: but one short moment — even now — Oh Lord help — Jesus be merciful!

Thus did I reflect, and thus at every gust of the wind did I conclude, — till it pleased the Almighty to allay it. — Nor did my emotions proceed either from the suggestion of too much natural fear, or a

conscience overburdened with crimes of an uncommon cast.—I thank God this was not the case. The scenes of horror exhibited around us, naturally awakened such ideas in every thinking breast, and aggravated the deformity of every failing of our lives. It were a lamentable insensibility indeed, not to have had such feelings,—and I think inconsistent with human nature.

Our distressed helpless condition taught us humility and a contempt of ourselves.—The horrors of the night—the prospect of an immediate cruel death—or, as one may say, of being crushed by the Almighty in his anger—filled us with terror. And everything that had tended to weaken our interest with Him, upbraided us, in the strongest colours, with our baseness and folly.—That which, in a calm unruffled temper, we call a natural cause, seemed then like the correction of the Deity.—Our imagination represented him as an incensed master, executing vengeance on the crimes of his servants.—The father and benefactor were forgot, and in that view, a consciousness of our guilt filled us with despair.

But see, the Lord relents—he hears our prayers—the Lightning ceases—the winds are appeased

—the warring elements are reconciled, and all things promise peace.—The darkness is dispelled—and drooping nature revives at the approaching dawn. Look back, Oh, my soul—look back and tremble.—Rejoice at thy deliverance, and humble thyself in the presence of thy deliverer.

Yet hold, Oh, vain mortal!—check thy ill-timed joy. Art thou so selfish as to exult because thy lot is happy in a season of universal woe?—Hast thou no feelings for the miseries of thy fellow-creatures, and art thou incapable of the soft pangs of sympathetic sorrow?—Look around thee and shudder at the view.—See desolation and ruin wherever thou turnest thine eye. See thy fellow-creatures pale and lifeless; their bodies mangled—their souls snatched into eternity—unexpected—alas! perhaps unprepared!—Hark the bitter groans of distress—see sickness and infirmities exposed to the inclemencies of wind and water—see tender infancy pinched with hunger and hanging to the mother's knee for food!—see the unhappy mother's anxiety—her poverty denies relief—her breast heaves with pangs of maternal pity—her heart is bursting—the tears gush down her cheeks—Oh sights of woe! Oh distress

unspeakable!—my heart bleeds—but I have no power to solace!—Oh ye, who revel in affluence, see the afflictions of humanity, and bestow your superfluity to ease them.—Say not, we have suffered also, and with-hold your compassion. What are your sufferings compared to these? Ye have still more than enough left.—Act wisely.—Succour the miserable and lay up a treasure in Heaven.

I am afraid, sir, you will think this description more the effort of imagination, than a true picture of realities. But I can affirm with the greatest truth, that there is not a single circumstance touched upon which I have not absolutely been an eye-witness to.

Our General has several very salutary and human regulations, and both in his public and private measures has shown himself *the man*.





EXTRACT FROM THE COMMON RECORDS OF NEVIS, 1725-  
1746. PAGE 429

To all to whom these presents shall come John  
Fawcett of the Island of Nevis Planter Sendeth  
Greeting.

Whereas diverse disputes and controversies have arisen and been between the said John Fawcett and Mary Fawcett his wife touching and concerning the maintenance of the said Mary separate and apart from her said husband AND WHEREAS the said Mary did lately apply herself unto His Excellency William Matthew Esquire Chancellor and Ordinary in Chief for the Leeward Charribbee Islands to be relieved against the said John Fawcett and His Excellency on the Petition of the said Mary did issue out a writ of Supplicavit for making a Provision Maintenance for the said Mary AND WHEREAS since the issuing out of the said writ they the said John Fawcett and Mary Fawcett have mutually agreed to live separate and apart from each other during the residue of their lives AND WHEREAS she the said Mary Fawcett hath joined with the said John Fawcett in the absolute sale of divers pieces or parcels of land and other tenements which he the said John was in possession of some in right of the said Mary and others in right of the said John in which she could at the death of the said John have claimed a dower or third part AND WHEREAS the said Mary in lieu of the said dower or third part hath accepted of the Bond or Obligation of William

Maynard of Nevis aforesaid Esq<sup>r</sup>. for the payment of the sum of Fifty and three pounds four shillings current money annually during her life for her separate maintenance and allowance as a full satisfaction of all her Dower or third part of the Estates of the said John Fawcett both real and personal which he shall be possessed of at the time of his death. Now KNOW YE that the said John Fawcett in consideration of the said Mary Fawcett's acceptance of the said yearly sum of Fifty and three pounds four shillings and for diverse and other good causes and considerations him thereunto moving HATH remised released and for ever quitt claimed and by these presents DOTH for himself his heirs exōrs. and admōrs. remise release and for ever quit claim unto the said Mary Fawcett her heirs exōrs. and admōrs. all his Right Tytle interest property reversion claim and demand whatsoever which he might could or may hereafter be intituled unto of in and to all or any part or parcell of the Estates either real or personall which she the said Mary Fawcett may be intituled unto or is in possession of or which she shall or may at any time hereafter be intituled unto or be in possession of either in her lifetime or at the day of her death or any person or

persons in trust for her the said Mary Fawcett. AND FURTHER the said John Fawcett doth hereby for himself his heirs executors and administrators covenant and agree with the said Mary Fawcett her heirs exōrs. and admōrs. that he the said John Fawcett his heirs exōrs. and admōrs. shall not at any time hereafter vex sue implead or cause or promise to be sued vexed or impleaded the said Mary Fawcett her heirs exōrs. or admōrs. for or on account of any goods chattels lands or tenements which she the said Mary Fawcett shall be possessed of in her lifetime or any person or persons in trust for her. IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said John Fawcett hath hereunto set his hand and seal the fifth day of February in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty and in the fourteenth year of the reign of King George the Second.

Sealed and delivered

in the presence of

JOHN FAWCETT.

GEORGE WEBBE senior.

JAMES DASENT.

GEORGE WEBBE jun.

NOTE.— Captain Ramsing, in searching the archives in Copenhagen for me, has found that Levine's name was spelt in the following different ways, varying doubtless with the education of the clerks:

Johan Michael Lavien, Johan Michael Lawien, Johan Michael Lewien, Johan Michael Levin, John Michael Lewin. Captain Ramsing tells me that the oldest form, Lawien, is probably the correct one; and it was probably anglicised by Hamilton into Lavine, as the "w" would be pronounced "v." On the Islands I found it spelt variously: Lavion, Levine, Le Vine. "Johan" indicates Danish or German origin.

I am also informed that Levine or Lawien probably was a Jew by birth, but must have changed his religion — perhaps when he married Rachael? — or he would have been written down in the records: "Levine the Jew."

All the names to be found in the records vary quite as much in the spelling as Levine's. — ED.



THE FOLLOWING ARE SPECIMENS OF THE NEWS-  
PAPER VERSE AND SCHOOLBOY DOGGEREL  
WHICH THE DEATH OF HAMILTON INSPIRED

ON THE DEATH OF HAMILTON

Oh! woe betide ye, Aaron Burr!  
My mickle curse upo' ye sa'!  
Ye've kill'd as brave a gentleman  
As e'er liv'd in America.

Wi' bloody mind ye ca'd him out,  
Wi' practic'd e'e did on him draw,  
And wi' deliberate, murderous aim,  
Ye kill'd the flower o' America.

A nobler heart, an abler head,  
Nor this, nor any nation saw;  
He was his Country's hope and pride,  
The darling of America.



Wha now, like him, wi' temper'd fire,  
 His country's " sword will strongly draw ";  
 And, 'mid the furious onset, spare  
 The vanquish'd foes o' America ?

Wha now, like him, wi' honest zeal,  
 Will argue in the Senate ha',  
 And lighten wi' his genius rays,  
 The interests of America ?

Mild, mild was he, o' tenderest heart,  
 Kind and sincere without a flaw ;  
 A loving husband, father, friend ;  
 And oh ! he lov'd America.

Torn by a murderer's desperate arm  
 Frae midst his friends and family a',  
 He's gone — the first of men is gone —  
 The glory of America !

Where'er ye go, O Aaron Burr !  
 The worm of conscience ay will gnaw ;  
 Your haunted fancy ay will paint  
 Your bloody deed in America.

But though ye flee o'er land and sea,  
And 'scape your injur'd country's law,  
The red right hand of angry Heav'n  
Will yet avenge America.

O save us, Heav'n! frae faction's rage;  
Our headstrong passions keep in awe!  
And frae ambition's hidden arts,  
Good Lord! preserve America.

---

Oh, Aaron Burr, what have you done?  
You've gone and killed great Hamilton.  
You hid behind a great tall thistle,  
And killed him with a big hoss pistol.



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